MYSTERY MAGAZINE

VOL. III Nº 57
MARCH 15, 1920

PRICE 10 CENTS

FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

THE CLUE OF STEEL

BY WILLIS LATHROP

OUR NEXT FEATURE STORY "ALIAS LOUIS VARDON"
By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. III MARCH 15, 1920. No. 57

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Published Twice a Month by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher

168 West 23d Street, New York

N. Hastings Wolff, Pres.
E. Byrne, Treas.
Charles E. Nylander, Sec.

LU. SENARENS, Editor

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

Domestic, Single Copy	10 Cents
Domestic, Yearly	$2.50
Canada	$2.75
Foreign	$3.00

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THE CLUE OF STEEL

A DETECTIVE STORY OF DEEP MYSTERY

By WILLIS LATHROP

CHAPTER ONE

THESE idle summer days when my mind is prone to retrospective habits, the incident of my sister-in-law's unusual death invariably recurs to my thoughts. The strange circumstances of the crime and the unusual manner of its detection have been a constant source of wonder to me, so much so that I am not surprised that my wandering thoughts are wont to revert to it as they do.

I had always been a frequent caller at my deceased brother's old residence on Forty-third street, for there was much to interest me there. There were my two nieces and my sister-in-law, who was the central source of interest, until her sudden departure for a better world changed things materially. She was a widow, with an adopted son named Rubert—a youth with a mean temper.

The strange event occurred on the very day when I felt that my visit should have been a most pleasantly interesting one. As Bertha was wont to consult me, in lieu of my deceased brother, when she desired information regarding her children or her financial matters, I was only moderately surprised when she had called me on the telephone that eventful afternoon to inform me that she particularly wished my advice on this occasion regarding Rupert, her adopted son. What surprise I experienced was in view of the fact that our talks never centered especially on Rupert, and that it was rare that she ever had any concern of a serious nature regarding him. The realization that it was to have been a very important interview, coupled with a certain amount of curiosity as to its nature, had served to hasten my steps toward her home, little thinking what I would find there.

That I heard a pistol shot, muffled as though its source were behind closed doors, just as I was turning in at my

brother's old home I should have been ready to swear before a jury, save for one thing. In a peaceful unpretentious home such as my sister-in-law's, what use would there be for revolvers? Would burglars break in and steal by day, or would children the like of Katherine, or Lois, come to blows with a mother like Bertha Hammond? Nevertheless, however incredible to my mind, my senses told me that I had heard a report, and, beset with a certain sense of misgiving, I quickened my pace. I lost no time in ascending the steps to the veranda and ringing the bell. There was no response for the duration of a minute, when I rapped on the door and waited again, and then, growing uneasy and impatient, rapped violently. Mrs. Hammond did not keep servants, not being in a financial position to afford them, or possessing the social attainments to have need of any. Her adopted son and two daughters might chance to be away all at the same time, I reasoned; yet why did not Bertha herself answer my summons? She could not have gone out, for she had been awaiting my call for half an hour. Filled with a vague fear that something was amiss, I stepped first to the dining-room window and peered in. Finding nothing there, I crossed to the living-room window. What I saw here partly reassured me, though I wonder at it now. Bertha sat in an armchair before the fireplace, facing the window, her eyes closed and her head dropped back in an attitude of peaceful relaxation.

However relieved I had been, my apprehensions quickly returned when I actually tried the door and found it locked. With a nameless, though, I felt, an unaccountable dread clutching at my heart, I stepped back and catapulted myself against the door, which flew open. I found the door from the hall into the living-room partly open and entered. I stepped up to Bertha and gently tapped her shoulder, as I am in the habit of doing when I find her in a doze, but got no response, which was unusual. Then I shook her; still without result, save that she slipped a little lower in the chair. It was then I recognized how utterly limp she was; next something caught my eye which made me shudder and turn sick for the minute. This was nothing more than a small—in fact, a very small—hole penetrating the flesh just above the open neck of her waist; yet I knew without thinking that whatever had caused it had gone straight to the heart.

This was the manner in which I discovered the crime, as I have so often been obliged to relate it since. I had come spurred with the expectation of learning something unusual. My expectation had been more than fulfilled; it had been rewarded with a repulsive reality for which I was of course quite unprepared. I had come expecting a new confidence from Bertha, something of more vital importance than anything that Bertha had so far divulged to my ears and I had found this! I stood for a moment dead to all else, overawed as I was by the horrible realization of its meaning and of its actuality.

Now another realization crept upon me. The crime could not have been committed very long previous; in fact, it would not have been half an hour old, for half an hour before she had been at the telephone calling me. Even now, I reflected, not without a shudder, the criminal—for I had not thought of suicide, it was so utterly impossible—might be lurking in the house, afraid to venture forth, or calmly awaiting an opportune moment to escape. As I hurriedly lifted the body and carried it to the davenport on the far side of the room, I felt doubly certain of this, for she had obviously not been dead for more than two or three minutes. Her body was not only limp, but warm, as though the blood still flowed within it. Reckoning from this, I felt that she must have been murdered just about the very moment that I had turned into the front yard and had thought I heard a pistol shot. But now that I had found something to account for such a thing, I failed to see how it could be accounted for, for the wound was too small to be caused by the smallest bullet. Could a third party have played his part, and shot in defence of Bertha, or have been shot in an attempt to interfere. This seemed very unlikely, for an examination of the floor revealed no blood spots between the fireplace and the door, which was the only means of exit. The matter was to be cleared up only as soon as the criminal was located and no sooner, I decided, so I at once commenced a systematic though somewhat rapid tour of the place. I didn't stop to knock at doors, and was consequently startled when I entered Rupert's room to discover my nephew himself seated there at his secretary, deeply intent on the contents of a novel.

"Rupert!" I said, with a surprised accent, and he jerked his head around with a start, only to smile sheepishly at me, as though ashamed of being startled, when he recognized my always welcome face. "Why didn't you answer the bell, my boy?" I demanded.

"My dear avuncular," he returned, his eyes fixed on the book again, "you might know how sound proof a fellow's mind is when he's deep in the middle of a story like this! I suppose I should really have answered the bell, for I think I did hear it now that you remind me, but I knew mother was expecting you, so I supposed she would admit you. Also, as you see, I have been deeply engrossed in this tale for over an hour. When did you come, Uncle?"

"About five minutes ago, I think."

"Rather late, weren't you? I thought mother expected you sooner."

"Perhaps she expected me to take the car," I replied pensively. I wondered why he should dwell on such a trivial matter. It was not like him. "But, my boy, didn't you hear a shot down-stairs?"

"A shot?" and he looked back at me, quizzically serious. "Why, no." I saw his face constantly assuming a deeper aspect of soberness. "I did think I heard something fall, but it didn't sound like a shot in any way."

"Well, I may have been mistaken, but it certainly sounded very like a report to me, and it was loud enough so I could hear it from the street sidewalk."

"It must have been a hallucination, Uncle Ben, for no one was hurt, surely?"

Then I told him. He fled from the room at once, and I heard him take the stairs, three at a step and the last four or five (I fancy) at one leap, judging from the impact he made with the floor. I resumed my search, which, of course (in the light of later events) proved fruitless. Before I commenced it, I looked through Rupert's room for a pistol, for I was not so anxious as I was before to meet the criminal empty handed, a target for any clever device he might have waiting for me. I found no pistol, though I had supposed Rupert kept one in the house for protection. Doubtless it was in some other room, and a box of blank cartridges in one drawer of his chiffonier lent probability to this supposition.

In searching the house, I of course sought some one outside of the family. It was unlikely enough that any one should wilfully murder Bertha Hammond, a peaceful lady of middle age and limited means, who to my knowledge had never wished harm on any one; and when it came to her own children, it seemed so out of the question that I never once thought to suspect one of them. Bertha had alluded at one time and another to influences of an immoral nature working upon Rupert, but what had this and his continually low financial condition to do with

the incentive of such a repulsive deed? My two nieces seemed even farther beyond the pale of possibility. Jealous Lois doubtless was toward her sister. But was jealousy of a mother's favoritism any adequate incentive for a matricide? I had felt these things rather than thought them, and so it had not occurred to me to suspect any one of the three, and for this reason I had not expected to find any of them at home. Rupert had surprised me, but during the rest of my search I encountered no one.

I carried a sheet down to cover the body and found Rupert bending over it, his face blanched, though he did not appear to be greatly agitated.

"Where are Lois and Kitty?" I asked. My question startled him, and I fancied he had become a prey to some apprehensive fear, perhaps that the murderer might return, based on some such supposition as I had experienced when I had wished for a pistol.

"Lois is at Mrs. Hunt's house, next-door. I can't say where Kitty is. She left the house not so long ago, I don't remember just how long."

"Before you heard that noise?"

"I couldn't say, I'm sure, Uncle Ben."

"Hadn't we better notify the police?"

"Yes. You should have done that first thing. Whoever did it has had a fine start by now."

I had been there often enough to know where the telephone was and lost no time getting to it. I lifted the receiver and held it for one tense moment. Then I pressed down the hook twice; waited again; rang again, all without result. I hung up the receiver and went back to the living-room.

"Central doesn't answer," I said in reply to the boy's inquiring look.

"Then, Uncle, you had better try Hunt's, next-door. And bring Lois home. She will wish to be here. The back way is the shortest and quickest."

I started to do as bidden, when my eye caught the glint of something shiny lying within the fireplace. I stooped and picked up what proved to be a hat-pin, with a heavy ivory head. For a length of three inches the pin was covered with freshly clotted blood. On the ivory head was a small, but very distinct finger print, also red, but in appearance darker than the blood on the pin. I did not in the least doubt that the darker color was to be ascribed merely to the contrasting white of the ivory.

"Here," I said excitedly and Rupert was at my side in an instant. "Here is the thing that did it! Doesn't it look like one of Kitty's?"

"It certainly is!" he declared. "It's Kitty's all right. I'd recognize that pin among a dozen very similar ones." His face was puckered up as though he was deeply puzzled but I did not observe any overt signs of worry or concern.

After finding that pin, I was not in so great a hurry to call the police, but I went for all that. My only hope, I felt, was in the identity of that bloody finger print. There would certainly be a case against Kitty unless, as I sincerely hoped, she would be able to prove an alibi, or unless the murderer—I could not reconcile the thought that it might be Kitty—were quickly apprehended. I reconciled myself to the duty of calling the police with this hope in view. The murderer could not have had much time to make his escape, so the sooner the authorities arrived, the better the chance of an immediate arrest.

Mrs. Hunt was willing enough to let me use her telephone, and ask no questions—until she discovered that I had called police headquarters. Why, who was killed? Who did it? Was any one suspected? All this and a dozen more things she had to know before her curiosity was satisfied.

"Strange that you heard a pistol shot," she commented, "if you say it was done with a hat-pin. Your ears must be bad, or else you have a powerful imagination."

This I was nearly ready to believe, myself, but as it happens, it is my eyes that are poor, and my hearing is correspondingly over-acute.

Then Lois was called, and with a painful effort I related all that was necessary. In spite of her usually sensitive aloofness, she at once burst out in a pitiful fit of sobbing. It was some minutes more before I could take her home, where I left her to sob and groan over the body of one who had tried to be both father and mother to her.

I observed that the sheet which I had so carefully placed over the body had been partly removed and then carelessly replaced. I drew Rupert aside and educed the explanation that he had been examining the wound. I remonstrated, with a shudder.

"What on earth did you expect to find? What good did you expect from it? We had best leave that for the police. They will soon be here."

He made no reply, but went slowly, reluctantly from the room, only to return again a moment later.

"Heaven knows, I wish it had been anything but that pin," he mumbled.

"But that's impossible," I said, positively. "All we can do is get hold of the person who used it as soon as possible."

Suddenly Rupert put his finger to his lips. "Not too loud, Uncle," he cautioned. "She—Kitty just came in a minute before you did. She's in the kitchen."

CHAPTER TWO

WITHOUT another word I hurried off to the kitchen, where I found her washing two milk bottles.

"Kitty!" I said anxiously. "Where have you been?"

She turned with a violent start and let one of the bottles fall with a crash to the floor. "Uncle!" she exclaimed. "Why did you scare me like that?" Then, after a pause to collect her wits, along with her breath: "Why, I started to the grocery to get some things for supper and when I got about halfway there I thought of these milk bottles and decided to come back for them. You're rather late, Uncle Ben, mother was expecting you at half-past three and it's fifteen after four now. Why are you frowning that way? Uncle, you look worried. Is something the matter? Has something gone wrong?"

Rupert suddenly entered the kitchen and asked: "What was that noise?"

"Merely that bottle falling," I said, thoughtfully. "Why?"

"Uncle, it was the same noise that I heard before, I am sure," he averred.

"Kitty," I asked, "did you break anything before you left for the store?"

She stared at us both, inquisitively, doubtfully. "Ye-es, I did," she admitted. "I let a heavy crock fall. I was in a hurry and carelessly lifted it off the table and then before I realized it was so heavy it had slipped out of my hand."

With a satisfied glance at me, Rupert made his exit.

"Why?" inquired my niece, turning naively to me.

Then the door-bell rang, and though relieved at this disturbance at such an opportune time, I found my trou-

bles coming from another direction. I admitted five plain-clothes officers, and as they entered I observed Kitty's hat on the hall stand and thrust into it was one of her ivory studded hat pins and one of a kind I had never seen before. I shuddered at the possibilities involved in this fact.

I took the officers into the living-room. Three of them at once commenced to turn everything in the room upside-down and inside-out; the fourth took from his pocket a case of instruments, uncovered the gruesome object which had once been the home of a living, breathing, loving soul, and proceeded at once to probe the wound.

"Nothing there," he informed the fifth officer, a sergeant, as I had supposed, who had stood idly watching him. "Appearances seem to point to the fact that it was done with a hat pin."

With this a hope occurred to me, only half rational, I admit, but genuine despite that. It was that Rupert might have thought to remove the hat pin from the room, where I had thoughtlessly left it when I went to telephone. An instant later, however, my hope was shattered. It had scarcely taken form when one of the officers stepped up to the sergeant and presented the pin for his inspection. The sergeant handled it with extreme caution and examined it closely; then he cast a glance of satisfaction in my direction, which left me inwardly upbraiding my own stupid thoughtlessness and resenting that of Rupert, as well as feeling alarmed over the way things were threatening to turn in Kitty's direction.

I was now asked to summon every person in the house. I called Rupert at once, but it took an effort before I could speak Kitty's name. Rupert had retired to his room on some excuse or other and did not come down at once. Kitty came as soon as she was called, I doubt not, because she detected the distress in my voice. Her first glance was patently one of curiosity. Then her eyes became fixed in a stare upon the white sheet, and so she stood for what seemed to me an interminable period, fascinated by the sight, until she turned a questioning glance at me and suddenly collapsed in a pitiful, sobbing heap in the doorway.

Lois was still in the living-room, and as soon as Rupert arrived on the scene we were grouped in a circle and the catchism commenced. Lois, of course, quickly proved an alibi, the neighbor, Mrs. Hunt, being summoned to swear to it. Then Rupert testified concerning his actions during the afternoon, and as he related the same facts with which he had favored me, I was able to confirm his statements with my own account of the affair, and I felt with a certain degree of relief that two members of the family were rendered secure from suspicion. Why Kitty should have been reserved till the last I have never been able to decide to my own satisfaction, unless because the officers had found evidence which seemed to point to her as the most promising suspect; but whatever the reason, this was a fact. The very first question the sergeant put to her was:

"Young lady, can you offer us any explanation regarding this hat-pin, as to its owner, and how it came to be left in this room?"

Without a moment's hesitation Kitty had rallied her powers of self-control and spoke: "It is my own hat pin, sir. That is all I know about it. I cannot understand how it happened to be here in this room, or how——" and she looked at the pin he held in his hand and shuddered. "I missed it yesterday noon."

"Do you usually keep your pins in your hat when you take it off at home?"

"Always, sir."

"What did you do when you missed that pin?"

"I went into Lois's room to ask if she had borrowed it, but found she was out."

"You did not ask your mother if she had borrowed this pin?"

A start. Whether due to guilty knowledge or the mere mention of her deceased mother—which would certainly have startled me—it was unmistakably an involuntary expression of surprise. After a second's hesitation, she faltered, "No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because it was so unlikely that mother would have any occasion to borrow a hat-pin. She always had plenty, and saw to it that I had plenty. Lois is the only person in our family who would be apt to borrow one. Well, I was in a hurry to go to the grocery, so I simply used another pin that I didn't like so well. I had only two of this kind."

"How long do you think your hat pin might have been missing without your knowledge of it?"

"Two days, sir. I can remember that Sunday was the last time I wore it before to-day."

"Very well. Then as soon as you put on your hat you hurried to the grocery? How far is it?"

With this, I found myself suffering with a dread of what was coming, and it was not without its reason, for after a moment's thought, Kitty answered in a forlorn voice, which declared her own realization of her perplexing situation:

"No, sir, I came back after I started. I remembered two milk bottles I had forgotten and hurried back for them."

"In spite of the fact that you were in a hurry to go to the store?" The sergeant's face was a Chinese puzzle as he scrutinized the girl.

"Yes, sir!"

"Did you meet any one whom you know or who recognized you on the street?"

"No, sir."

"Not even your uncle?"

"No, sir."

The sergeant at last relaxed his relentless scrutiny of her face, and I think every one in the room guessed instinctively that he had finished. At any rate, all eyes were at once turned on his as though awaiting the decision of a coroner's jury.

"We are sorry, young lady, but it will be necessary to detain you on circumstantial evidence. We have enough to make it imperative."

Kitty offered no protest. The police departed at once, without waiting to replace the books they had piled on the floor or the phonograph records they had treated in like fashion, or even to close the hood of the phonograph, which they had opened in their search.

That evening about supper time they sent a finger print expert to the house. I had gone out for a walk, hoping to work off my growing uneasiness, but I absent-mindedly returned to the scene of the crime, just in time, as fate would have it, to learn the finger print expert's decision. He was certain that the finger print was Kitty's! He had been to the city jail and taken a print of her fingers on both hands and found that two of these coincided with that on the pin.

This was too much for me. I had felt, before, that Kitty had a fair chance with a skillful lawyer; now it seemed hopeless. I went to Kitty's room and searched it well, determined to root up some bit of evidence in my niece's favor. I did not want to believe her guilty even though the evidence was all against her. I felt that

there must be some bit of evidence in her favor, however obscure. My problem was to bring it to light. I was disappointed in my examination of the room. It was all cleaned up and all her correspondence of any description was locked up in her secretary. As a last resort I turned to the waste paper basket, and there found nothing more than the discarded wrapper of a milk chocolate. Not to be baffled so easily, I inquired of all the neighbors with whom Bertha or her children were acquainted, but I got no better results, for no one had seen Kitty that afternoon, not even the people who lived along the route she took to go to the grocery, three blocks or so away. Exasperated, I decided to consult Kitty herself. She must have some hint to offer me, unless she was really guilty, which I hadn't yet made up my mind to believe.

Admittance to the jail was a simpler matter than I had anticipated for a relative of the accused girl, but we were not allowed out of hearing of the keeper. This annoyed me, for I felt that Kitty might have some bit of information for a trusted relative which she would not care to divulge to other ears. At least, she might have had some slight hint to offer.

I found her sobbing despondently in her dismal cell. I tried to console her by assuring her that I would do my best and secure the most expert counsel I could find.

"But, Uncle Ben, why should I need counsel? I don't understand. I know nothing of this dreadful crime. I didn't do it," she replied brokenly.

"I am sure you didn't, my girl," I said as tenderly as possible. "That is why I am trying to straighten this thing out. It is purely a gross misunderstanding. I came here to see if you could not help me with a suggestion or two."

"I'm afraid I can tell you nothing you do not already know, dear uncle. And I don't think you can help me much, but I'm grateful for your kind intention."

"Then I guess all we can do is get a good lawyer," I said, resignedly, wretchedly.

"No, Uncle Ben, a lawyer won't do any good either. What we need is a really expert detective."

"But the police detectives tried it and all they found was—well—evidence against you."

"Circumstantial evidence, uncle."

"But enough to—"

"Yes, enough to convict me. But I know of a man I am sure can save me, Uncle Ben. There must be some way to prove I did not do it, and if there is, this man can find it."

"Then in heaven's name, who?"

"Arthur Kadinger."

"Who?"

"Detective Kadinger."

I cudgeled my brain a moment, then shook my head. "I never heard of him," I said.

"Yes you have."

"Some chap you've been flirting with who has been boasting of his deeds of valor?"

A wan smile crossed her lips at this. "Fancy flirting with a man like Kadinger! Uncle, I thought you knew better. I did not say I knew him personally," she said, with quick, nervous accentuation in every word, and then suddenly relapsed into a moody silence, which was, to say the least, unnatural. I had never known her to be anything but vivacious, even under trying circumstances. Still, I reflected, one would hardly expect any person in her perplexing if not actually dangerous situation to be natural.

"If you do not know this man personally, what makes you think he can save you from such an unalterable condition as this?" I prompted.

"Oh—why—I've heard a lot about him."

"From whom,"

"Why—in the papers—mostly."

"What sort of a person is he?"

"He's a—what did it say? Oh, yes! A specialist on criminology, but everybody calls him just 'Detective Kadinger. He's famous, too. People all over the country consult him by mail, and he goes all over to take cases if they're important."

There was a convincing manner in her tones and the more she talked about this man, the more she seemed to forget her troubles. There was also an appealing, eager look in her eyes, which I found it difficult to resist. But I was determined to know all there was to know about the man before I consented to engage him. I felt that the exigencies of the case called for it.

"What sort of a reputation has he?" I pursued.

"Oh, he's wonderful, Uncle Ben. He does lots of marvelous things. Haven't you read about him?"

"I take little stock in news stories," I said.

"But, Uncle Ben! He is, I tell you."

"Do you think he would consider your case important enough to——?"

"Why, uncle! He'd be delighted! I'm sure he would! Please, uncle!"

"Very well," uncle assented, unable to hold out longer. "If he is really the kind of man you make him out to be, then your case is one for just such a man to handle. But I wish I knew more about him."

"You will, soon, uncle, and you will be glad you got him. He may charge us—well—quite a little, but it's either that or"—a long pause—"or the prison."

When we parted, I am sure it was with lighter hearts than either of us had had for hours.

I shall not depict the lowering doubts that assailed me during the remainder of that night, nor the tedious routine of the coroner's inquest the next morning. To some this event was doubtless interesting but to me it was a mere meaningless formality. I was thankful that it lasted no longer than it did. If my feelings were in any way altered when the jury reached its verdict of wilful and unpremeditated murder by a person known, it was only in that I realized still more the urgent need of some expert mind to unravel what promised to be by far the most damning case of murder in my range of history.

CHAPTER THREE

THE juryman did not need to call out the name of the person, for me to know whom they all meant. I asked myself whether even such a man as this Detective Kadinger was reputed to be could fathom such a complex affair as this. A man of recondite learning myself, I felt that the solution, if there was any, must in its nature be very abstruse indeed.

The verdict rendered, I found myself at liberty to consult the criminologist. I found him at his quarters on lower Broadway, which I located in the city directory. He was ensconced in an easy-chair before a table, on which stood, among a number of curious objects and instruments unfamiliar to me, a microscope, a set of magnifying lenses, and several books. He looked up with a peculiar sort of peering frown as I entered the large, roomy chamber.

"Mr. Kadinger, I believe?" I said. "I am Professor Benedict Hammond."

"Make yourself at home, professor," he said courteously. He had a very pleasing, reassuring manner in his personality. "Have a look at my little private museum. If you are at all interested in such things, you will not find mine an exception, I assure you. By the time you are through I shall be at your service." He waved his hand to indicate a number of showcases arranged about the room, and following with my eyes, I noted that they contained a great variety of curious exhibits; including plaster casts of human hands and feet, and of footprints; color photographs of handprints, fingerprints, and even footprints; bones of all descriptions; and all manner of weapons, even to a large whaler's harpoon.

"An interesting little collection, isn't it, professor? Taken from trials and various other places."

I tried to show signs of other than mere casual curiosity, but I am sure he detected my impatience, for he shortly laid aside the lens and the tiny scrap of newspaper which he had been examining through it, and leaned comfortably back in his chair. He called a Jap valet, who placed a chair near him, and then motioning me to it, he turned a pair of fine black, deep-set eyes attentively upon me.

"Mr. Kadinger," I began, relieved at the prospect of being able to communicate my troubles to some one on whom I felt intuitively that I could rely, "I have come on the option of my niece to ask your advice, if not your further service concerning what I consider a most extraordinary mystery. The evidence seems to have piled up around my niece and yet I can not feel that she is guilty."

"But, professor, if the evidence says she is guilty, then she must be."

"But there is the puzzling thing about it. It is all circumstantial evidence."

"Well! That alters matters, I must say!" He was lost in thought for a moment, then continued: "What you have said sounds enticing, Professor Hammond. Though many people profess to show me something interesting, most of their cases are no more involved in their nature than the usual affair when one ruffian shoots down another in a dark lane. But yours promises some interesting developments; so let's have it."

I acquainted him with what I considered a fairly accurate and particular account of the case, but he was not satisfied. With questions and cross-questions he wormed from me every insignificant detail that I had omitted, even to the box of blank cartridges in Rupert's room, and the wrapper I had found in Kitty's basket.

He seemed to be especially interested in the sound I had heard or thought I had heard just before entering the house. I thought this odd, for I had already dismissed it as a delusion of mine, caused by a shutter slamming, or something of the sort. If Rupert, half a dozen policemen, a coroner, and a woman thought so, it must be so, under the circumstances. Yet Kadinger harped on it again and again, pondered it, scratched his head over it, and finally gave it his opinion. "Peculiar," he said.

When I had finished what had evolved itself into rather a long and, to me, tiresome yarn, he opined:

"A very logical narrative and a most unusual case. But we will soon rob it of some of its interest, professor, unless I am grossly mistaken."

"Then you consider the case worthy of investigation?"

He assured me again, at some length, that it gave promise of some interesting developments.

"In short, professor," he concluded, "I should surmise that we will find the solution of this little mystery very simple in its nature after all."

"Indeed?" said I, "I should imagine it would be very involved. At least if there are any clues in my niece's favor they must be very inconspicuous."

"Well, perhaps so, professor, at least to one who does not know where to look for them. Yet what is the matter with that there hat pin? If your niece was aware of the crime, why was that hat pin still in her hat? Why, in fact, wasn't either of them hidden, so that such damning evidence would not be left to convict her?"

To be sure, I had no immediate reply for this; but after some little thought, I said, "That is hardly enough to save the girl. She is assumed to have done it impulsively, with no idea of preparing for the crime or of covering it up afterward."

"Quite true; but I think we shall find other clues."

"I fail to see where."

"We'll have to use a little keener observation, for I fancy they will not be quite so conspicuous as this one."

"You seem to be confident that you can get to the bottom of this miserable affair," I said.

"Miserable? It is the most interesting thing I have run across in months. I am much indebted to you, professor, for bringing it to my notice."

"I shall be greatly indebted to you if you get to the bottom of it and save my niece from what I am convinced is a rank injustice," I said.

"Which I am sure we shall accomplish."

"I cannot understand how you can hope to. To me it is an inexplicable paradox," I persisted.

"But you know that there is no such thing as an impossibility in existence; no paradox exists that does not have its explanation; therefore there must be a solution. This is how I propose to get at it. First of all, we must disbelieve all appearances and think exactly the opposite to what we feel inclined to suspect, for the safety of this criminal evidently lies in the impressions he has left to play on the onlookers. He relies on these impressions, false in themselves, to conceal the truth of the case from us; hence the proper way to detect him is to look in the opposite direction from that in which these impressions tend to lead us. In order to dig up the truth, we must bury the lie. Another thing: We must not fall desperately in love with any one theory—not till we are sure we have the right one, that is. The detective who does that is as useless as no detective at all. We must keep our minds open for all possibilities, no matter what brilliant ideas may pop into them. These ideas may prove to be utterly false, so we must be ready to discard these and consider new ones. Thus, professor, all we need is the use of a little close observation to collect our clues, and common sense ingenuity to link them together."

"Well, we will go and look things over."

We caught a Moneta Avenue car at once, and it relieved me to feel that this man was interested enough to willingly leave whatever other urgent calls he may have had in favor of this. I inferred from this that he actually believed Kitty was innocent and that it was therefore imperative to get to the bottom of the affair and bring to light the real criminal at once.

As Kadinger was admitted to my late brother's house, he gave a swift look about the hall, and as though perfectly familiar with the place, he turned to his right and entered the living room. I followed him. As we entered he remarked:

"I trust we shall find your nephew in, professor. We may have need of his services soon."

As he said this he turned and favored me with an amused scrutiny, which caused my mind to overflow with wild and confused conjectures. A moment later he was bending over the body, holding in one hand the murderous hat pin

and in the other a six-inch ruler. "Are you sure, professor, that this wound was thoroughly probed?" he inquired.

"Why, I can make no assertion as to the thoroughness, but I saw it probed with my own eyes."

"Did they seem to suspect any one else had probed it before them?"

"Why, no, I think not," I said with a shudder. But my perplexity at such an odd question quickly overcame my horror of the subject. "But why any one should wish to probe it when they could easily see that the thing was done with that hat pin I fail to comprehend."

"There you go! Didn't I tell you half an hour ago to mistrust all appearances?"

I subsided, somewhat perplexed.

"How long were you at the neighbor's place trying to get the police?"

"Why, the truth is I was not telephoning the whole time. Mrs. Hunt had to be informed why I was calling the police, and then I had to tell Lois and wait till she was ready to come home."

"To be sure, so you told me. You were gone, then, say——?"

"Ten minutes or more."

"Very likely. You went by the back way?"

"Yes. Rupert advised me to, as it is the shorter way. But Lois and I returned the front way."

"And Katherine was in the kitchen when you returned?"

I nodded assent.

"Hum!" He tapped the ruler on his knuckles for one pensive minute. Then, "Mr. Hammond, can't you imagine why the telephone here didn't happen to be working?"

"No. What has that to do with it?" I replied.

"A great deal to do with it, I suspect. I may be wrong myself, but I think not. At any rate, we shall soon see."

I saw him measure the length of the stain on the hat pin and then insert the pin into the wound. He moved the hat pin back and forth and I observed that it bent. He looked up from his work and smiled at me as though enjoying a triumph of some sort. Then he carefully withdrew the pin and measured again; and again he looked at me with that same smile.

Then, all of a sudden, his eyes had become rooted upon the still open phonograph, and thus he stood, like the very statue of thought, for another minute, when he quietly stepped to the machine. At first he touched nothing but quietly scrutinized everything. Then he seized a tray filled with used needles, and, holding it in one hand, he poked the index finger of the other through the needles, and presently picked up two of them, one dangling from the other. "Here, professor," he said in his most placid manner, "is the instrument which killed your sister-in-law."

"What!" I cried. "Then it wasn't the hat pin after all:"

"What made you think it was?"

"Why, the blood stain! the finger print!"

"In spite of the fact that I warned you to disbelieve all appearances! I know it's a hard thing to do, but it's the secret of solution of all apparently inexplicable problems like this. Professor, are you certain that you heard a shot?"

"Quite certain," I said, "though I am not sure I should be willing to swear to it under the circumstances."

"Well, well! You say you think you heard a report. A report of what? Not the report of a hat pin?"

The last sentence revealed unmistakably the sarcasm in his meaning.

"Why, no," I said, hardly knowing what to make of it. "The report of a pistol, I should suppose."

"Ah! Then the hat pin was fired from a pistol, was it? Did you ever hear of such a combination? Certainly not! The hat pin had nothing to do with it save to delude the police and throw suspicion on an innocent person. The deed was done by firing one of these two needles—I cannot say which, for it has been so well cleaned—from the end of a blank cartridge. Afterward, while you were calling the police—for you say the crime was committed barely a minute or two before you entered the house—the criminal was at work removing his bullet from the body by means of a strong magnet, and had cleaned it and placed it among the other needles before you returned. You see, he hadn't the time to do it before the murder was discovered. But he made two serious mistakes, one of which was due to accident and the other to pure carelessness. For instance, it could be no gentle hand which could drive a hat pin clear through a solid rib with one blow!"

I looked my astonishment, but said nothing. Things were clearing up fast enough and I was content to let the good work continue with no questions asked. Now I understood his triumph on observing that the hat pin bent when he moved it back and forth in the wound.

"This, of course, could not be helped," Kadinger went on, "seeing that the shot was likely fired from a distance, very probably from the doorway. But he might, at least, have inserted the hat pin after he had withdrawn the phonograph needle, so that the stain on the hat pin would prove to be as long as the wound itself instead of half an inch shorter, as I found it. But, of course, he feared that you might suspect something underhand if you found the pin after you went to call the police, and he did not dream that a stupid detective would think to use the hat pin as a probe, and still less that he would measure the length of the stain before and after inserting the pin!"

CHAPTER FOUR

"HAVE you any theory regarding the motive?" I asked, growing impatient to learn all that he knew.

"It was done to conceal another crime from threatened exposure." Kadinger paused a moment to watch my expression, then continued: "Because he took such infinite pains to avoid detection. If the crime itself was done with intent to prevent threatened detection, would he not naturally take extraordinary precautions to prevent the burden of this second crime being thrown on his shoulders?

"Mark me, professor, this thing has become as plain as daylight. It's as overt as a sentence in a book, once you have summed up all the words and have their meaning. I thought it would be an interesting case, but after you know it all, it turns out to be exactly as interesting as the common run of them. Well, professor, do you happen to know if there is a magnet of any kind in the house? If so, we will try a little experiment for a change."

I went to the basement and procured an old magneto magnet which belonged to an old-fashioned telephone. Kadinger took the magnet, picked up the tray of unused needles, and kept touching the magnet to them and pulling off the mass of needles which clung to it. This process he repeated assiduously for ten minutes, until the needles all clung together, three or four hanging to each other in a string. He then replaced the tray, dropped the magnet in his pocket, and said:

"Summon your nephew."

Rupert stalked suddenly into the room. "What's wanted?" he demanded.

"I want to introduce you to Mr. Kadinger, a detective who is working on your sister's case," I said.

Rupert proferred his hand, but Kadinger did not respond.

"Sorry I can't shake, young man," he said, "but you can see for yourself that my hands are blood-stained. I have been handling that fierce looking hat pin over there," pointing at the pin where it lay on the library table, with the ruler laid near it.

Then Kadinger launched into a technical discussion of music and its improvement on the phonograph, the words of which quite escaped my distracted mind a moment later.

"By the way!" he suddenly exclaimed, "these little needles would serve well as an inconspicuous means of killing some one."

He did not appear to be looking at Rupert, but I am sure he was—out of the corners of his eyes. I am equally certain that he saw Rupert stiffen as though in an effort at self-control, but he revealed no sign that he had observed it. Then he launched again into an irrelevant discussion on needles and the quality of tone which they produced. "I don't think I have ever heard a piece played through one of these steel half-tone needles," he concluded. "Would you mind playing something? I am interested, and I assure you it would be a treat."

Without a word Rupert rose from his chair, walked quickly to the machine, and reached for a needle. What he picked up was not one, but a chain of half a dozen needles. He dropped them and stepped back with a low, gurgling cry. Then he whirled and faced the specialist.

"You fiend!" he snarled. "What sort of a game are you playing with me?"

"A game of justice against a criminal. You are the murderer of your foster-mother! You may as well own up and let it end there," Kadinger replied evenly.

Suddenly Rupert reached for his hip pocket and drew out a large black pistol. I leaped at him, but I am not young and heavily built, as he was. He was mad with rage or desperation—it would be hard to say which—and threw me off easily. Then he fired, and another shot answered back. I saw the boy stagger and then collapse.

I knelt over him on the floor and Kadinger followed my example, whispering to me, "It isn't fatal, but let him think it is for a moment. He may confess."

A few moments later the boy's eyes opened. They looked up at me questioningly and seemed to ignore the criminologist's presence.

"Am I going?" he asked.

I nodded.

"I'm sorry, uncle. Mother knew of a forgery I had committed—discovered it day before yesterday—and said she would ask your advice. I knew she would do what you advised, and that meant a life term, so I——"

And then he sank into a faint again. He did not recover for some days, but Kadinger saw to it that he had a reasonable amount of care. He used his personal influence to secure Kitty's release, and then offered us both an explanation of how he fathomed what had been such a seemingly unfathomable mystery, but which, after he had explained it, seemed simple enough to me.

"There were two impressions which I resolved not to heed, but rather to believe their exact opposites." That was how he began it. "Professor, you remember that I told you we must look in the opposite direction from that in which these impressions led us. Now one impression seemed to point irresistibly to the hat pin as the weapon, because of the blood stain and red finger print. The opposite hypothesis, then, seemed to be that a pistol was used. This was very difficult to comprehend at first, but your supposition that you had heard a pistol shot lent probability to it, and I fell to wondering how a pistol shot could be made to cause such a wound. I failed at first, but it occurred to me to find out by measuring the length of that stain on the hat pin, then by the method you witnessed, the length of the wound. I was not sure of my results, but afterward I saw that if any bullet had been used it must have been ejected after you had discovered the crime, and you had found that pin, already stained with blood, before you went to telephone; so it must have been inserted before the 'bullet' was ejected.

"In making the measurements I happened to discover that the wound passed through a rib. That was conclusive evidence that it was not done with the pin, which would have snapped in twain at the impact, even if any hand were powerful enough to drive it through. My next effort was to learn what had been used. Obviously it was something exactly as large around as a hat pin. This difference in lengths—this time, you see, it was a question of taking two from two-and-a-half to make half an inch, instead of adding two and two to make four—the difference in lengths, and the fact that the object used had the same diameter, or in other words caliber, as the pin, at once suggested a steel phonograph needle. You remember, professor, that you mentioned finding a box of blank cartridges in your nephew's room? Well, it was simply a case of putting blank cartridges and phonograph needles together.

"My next problem was to learn what had become of the needle. It had been removed from the wound in some manner as yet unknown to me, which left no trace of the wound having been disturbed. Since the criminal had used such infinite pains and calculation to direct suspicion away from himself, I felt that he would use a certain degree of sagacity in concealing the one object which, if not found, would cause some one else—the owner of the hat pin—to bear the consequences for the crime, and put an immediate and permanent stop to investigation, and which, if forever lost to the eyes of the world, would render him immune from conviction, or even suspicion. The most secure place for that needle was the place whence it came, but not among the good needles, which would be fingered by the next person to use the phonograph. So I searched the tray of used needles. My only hope was that there might be some slight sign of blood remaining on it. Had that failed, I should have procured a microscope, and subjected each needle to its scrutiny; but the magnetism saved me the trouble. Moving the needles about with my finger, I observed that these two persistently clung together. I at once jumped to the conclusion that he had used a magnet to eject the needle from the wound.

"I accordingly planned to detect the guilty man by means of the test you witnessed. Well, you know the result.

"As for that second false impression, the telephone being conveniently out of order, made that bald enough. It was obvious to me from the moment Professor Hammond finished telling his story that the crime was only half committed when he went to telephone. The criminal had yet to remove his bullet. Doubtless he wished to give the impression that the crime was committed soon before its discovery, in order to preclude the idea of any complexity being concerned in it. He wanted others to feel that it had been a simple deed, committed impulsively, without the least premeditation, and with the first weapon that came handy, which, of course, in a young lady's case, would be her own hat pin. With this impression firmly fixed in the minds of the investigation element, he felt that the possibility that a bullet had been removed from the wound after, or even before, the discovery was secure from suspicion. So, professor, my contention that the criminal relied on these false impressions to shield him was correct."

A lenient judge gave Rupert a sentence of life imprisonment, and Kitty and her sister are happily married now. And Time, the great healer, has made the tragedy but a haunting memory of the past.

JENKYN'S BOOMERANG

By MARY ELIZABETH BURTIS

ALBERT JENKYN rushed enthusiastically into the living-room. "It works! The silver will be perfectly safe, Cornelia, while we are away. By my latest invent——"

Mrs. Jenkyn was bending over an open trunk. She straightened up with an impatient jerk. "I suppose you mean that phonograph arrangement in the garret. I have no faith in it." She dived once more into the trunk.

"What!" cried Jenkyn. "No faith in my new patent phonographic burglar alarm?"

"No." Mrs. Jenkyn bobbed up again like a jack-in-the-box from behind the raised trunk lid and surveyed her lean, scholarly husband with cold disapproval. "You haven't invented anything useful yet."

"Cornelia! I am sure——"

"No—you have not. Your patent dishwasher broke my best dishes the first time you tried it; that remarkable family shoe-blacker blacked up you, me, and the cat, and spoiled a handsome rug."

His lean face reddened. "Cornelia, why recall the first failures of a colossal brain! The dishwasher would have been a great success if I had remembered to set the clock-work at dinner plates, instead of salt-cellars. But why dwell on past mistakes? This new invention is really wonderful; after the alarm is set, if a window is raised, the telephone in the garret calls the police, and the phonograph repeats my name and address and the word burglars. The police station is so near that the thief will be caught immediately."

"It sounds well when you describe it; but so did the dishwasher and the shoe-blacker. You'd better begin packing now, or we'll miss the train." Mrs. Jenkyn always had the last word.

They left for the Grand Central station a little after eleven that evening. Mr. Jenkyn had been called West on business; Mrs. Jenkyn, at the last moment, had decided to accompany him, hence their reason for taking the midnight train instead of an earlier one.

"There! I knew we started too early," exclaimed Mrs. Jenkyn as she caught sight of the station clock. "Thirty-five minutes to wait." Suddenly she gave a start of dismay. "I've left my handbag with my rings and my diamond sunburst in it on my bureau! Oh, what shall I do?"

"Nothing, my dear." Jenkyn's tone was confident. "They are perfectly safe. Remember the burgla——"

"Don't you dare mention that horrid invention, Albert Jenkyn. "Trust my jewelry to that burglar alarm! Never! I won't stir one step without them."

Jenkyn looked at his wife; then he looked at his watch. "I can just do it. Stay here and don't get nervous."

He took a subway express and sat, watch in hand, all the way to his station. The distance from subway to house was covered in just three minutes. Dashing up the front steps he fumbled for his latch-key. With a horribly sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach, the suddenly remembered that key was in the pocket of the coat he had worn that morning, and the coat was hanging in his closet.

He tore down the steps and around to the rear of the house, pried open a window with his knife, and crawled in. Dashing through the front hall, he switched on all th electric lights and took the stairs in a series of bound. He stubbed his toe on a rocking chair as he hurriedly entered their bedroom.

"Why must a woman always forget something!" he muttered.

Seizing the bag from the bureau, he stuffed it into his overcoat pocket. A glance at the mantel clock showed him he had lost much precious time. Back he dashed to the lower floor, switched off the lights, opened the kitchen door—and stopped abruptly.

Two pistols were leveled at his breast; two voices commanded him to throw up his hands.

"Don't stop me! It's all right! Wife forgot her handbag! I must make that midnight train!"

Both officers grinned appreciatively. The stout, red-faced man spoke first:

"Of course you're in a hurry to catch a train; that's what they all say. Ain't it, Mike?"

Jenkyn made a dash for the open window. Mike grappled with him, and before Jenkyn quite realized what had happened, he found himself lying on the floor, his clothing torn, one eye closed, and blood flowing from a cut on his forehead. A pair of handcuffs were on his wrists.

"Wh-a-t does this mean? Handcuffing me in my own home! I'll have you arrested for assault and battery."

"Looks as if you lived here. Officer Flynn put his hand in Jenkyn's pocket and pulled out the hand-bag. Snapping it open, he displayed the jewelry.

"They—they belong to my wife. She sent me back for them."

"The sergeant won't swallow that story; you'd better make up a better one," laughed Flynn.

"I am Mr. Jenkyn. My business cards are in my pocket."

Flynn searched for them. Then the wretched man remembered that they, too, were upstairs in the same coat pocket which held his latch-key. He gave this information to the men, but it was greeted with derisive laughter.

"Yez didn't know, did yez, that while yez was monkeyin' wid that windy, a telle-phone an' a phoney-graft was goin' off, callin' the police?" chuckled Mike.

"Damn!"

"I don't blame yez fer swearin'."

"Aw, stop foolin' with him, Mike. Take him around to the station."

"Sure! Just see if the front dure opens from this soide."

"Confound it, why didn't I think of that door," groaned Jenkyn.

"It's forgettin' little things that always gives a thief away," observed Officer Flynn, as he left the kitchen.

Mike hauled Jenkyn to his feet in no very gentle manner and led him from the room.

"Won't you take me to the Grand Central first, so I can get my wife?" Jenkyn begged.

"Ain't he the quare thafe?" Mike tapped his forehead significantly as he joined Flynn.

As they were leaving the house, and before Flynn had closed the door, a man rushed up the steps. "What's the

matter here? Burglar at work, eh? I'm glad you caught him before I got home; he looks like an ugly customer."

Jenkyn stared at him in amazement.

"Are yez Mr. Jenkyn?" asked Mike suspiciously.

The young man looked sharply at his questioner. "No, I'm his nephew."

"You're a liar!" exploded Jenkyn. "You're a rank impostor!"

Flynn winked. "He's tryin' to make us believe he lives here, when we got word this mornin' that the owner's gone to California on a trip."

"Exactly. I'm left in charge." He slipped a bill into each ready palm and stepped inside the door. "Good night, officers."

Fighting, swearing, protesting, Jenkyn was dragged down the steps.

Woman-like, when Mrs. Jenkyn discovered that her husband had missed the train, she blamed him severely; then, as time passed, she grew alarmed and returned home.

What a sight met her eyes. Silver gone! Jewels gone! Worst of all, Albert gone! She flew to the police station and poured out her story.

The sergeant was reassuring. "Don't worry, Mrs. Jenkyn, we caught the burglar, a tough-looking customer, redhanded, and he's locked up."

"I don't want the burglar; I want my husband. He returned home for my bag of jewels and I haven't seen him since."

As she spoke the sergeant's face wore a queer expression. He produced the hand-bag. "Is this yours?" he manded.

"Ye-es, but where, where is Albert?"

The sergeant stroked his chin thoughtfully. "I'm afraid, very much afraid, we have Albert here."

Led to her husband's cell, Mrs. Jenkyn entered, but hesitated at sight of the dilapidated figure on the narrow prison cot.

"Albert, is it really you?"

Jenkyn turned at the sound of her voice and peered at her out of the uninjured eye. "What's left of me."

Corneila sank on her knees beside him. "I've been nearly distracted," she said tearfully. "When you didn't come back I went home and——"

"Yes, I know—everything we owned gone—stolen—all the fault of that damned burglar alarm."

"Why did you invent it, then? Let this be a lesson to you."

A certain grim smile of satisfaction lighted up the damaged countenance of Jenkyn.

"But it worked, Cornelia, it worked!"

PREHISTORIC ARCTIC RACE DUG FROM ICE

HIDDEN for centuries underneath the ice fields north of Alaska, a scientific expedition headed by William Van Valin of the University of Pennsylvania has discovered the remains of a prehistoric Arctic race.

This remarkable find includes the fully-clothed remains of no fewer than one hundred individuals who apparently met sudden and unexpected death in a village of six igloos, afterward covered by ice and snow, where they remained sealed until the present time.

The life, habits and physical appearance of this remarkable people bore little resemblance to the Eskimo. They were seemingly more nearly related to the natives of Siberia, and the scientists are proceeding on the theory that they constitute the long-sought link between Asia and America.

The discovery was made near Point Barrow, the northernmost tip of Alaska. Mr. Van Valin, head of the expedition, was sent out two and a half years ago by the University of Pennsylvania to make an exhaustive study of the Eskimo.

He was investigating a shallow swail in search of Eskimo relics when his attention was attracted by the peculiar character of some debris. This led to a still further examination. Buried beneath four feet of ice, snow and tundra, were uncovered what was recognized at once as the wreckage of a collection of ancient huts or igloos. They had been constructed of drift woods of various kinds, covered with dome-shaped roofs cut from the tundra. The roofs had long since fallen in, while little remained even of the sides of the huts.

The great discovery, however, was made when the explorers came upon the first of the frozen bodies. In many instances the positions of the bodies, all in perfect state of preservation, frozen in solid block of ice, suggested that death had overtaken them unexpectedly. Some had died in the act of drinking, at least that is the supposition from the presence in their hands of what appeared to be long tubes, one end of which was held between the lips.

Of the hundred or more bodies nearly all were fully attired. Many were lying on beds of musk, often under polar bear skins. The apparel worn by some showed that the race had learned to fabricate clothing from the skins of birds and that they also understood the art of tanning or curing skins of animals.

One thing seems certain. The community was overtaken by some suddenly developing catastrophe. It may have been a northern storm of unusual duration which held them ice bound until death relieved them from the agonies of starvation. It may have been some sweeping, fatal epidemic. The latter explanation, however, is not readily accepted by the scientist. Rather the opinion leans to the catastrophe theory. Pompeii, buried beneath the lava and cinders of Mount Vesuvius, may have had its counterpart, they say, in the frozen Northland—one as fatal as the other.

Unfortunately the fate which befell the skins and furs and birdskin suits awaited the wearers as well. Although when discovered many of the bodies still retained their flesh there was no means at the command of Mr. Van Valin for preserving them. But a few hours' exposure to warmer air was required to cause the fleshy portions to sluff away. Fortunately, however, the skeletons remain intact, perfectly articulated, and within a very short time will be in the University Museum.

Many interesting and valuable relics were discovered in the ruins of the six igloos. Some idea of the anomalous relationship between the inhabitants and the Eskimo is suggested by pieces of pottery found amid the ruins. The Eskimo of to-day uses soapstone utensils. No trace of such utensils could be found in the igloos.

Among the implements used by the ancient race some are of similar construction and shape as those used by the Eskimos. Of particular interest interest is the fact that jade was used by the lost race. It must have been secured from points as far as five hundred miles away.

Inquiries by Mr. Van Valin among the Eskimos proved that the latter race has no traditions connected with the inhabitants whose remains he had discovered. This is taken to indicate that the race must have disappeared centuries ago, for the Eskimo's "ancient story" goes far back.

A YELLOW DIAMOND RING

By ESTHER RANDALL

PART ONE

IT often happens while piping one case that a detective chances upon odds and ends of incidents which help unfold the mysteries of another. Something of the kind occurred on a certain occasion when I was shadowing a party whose misdeeds are in no way associated with the events of this narrative. On that night I had shadowed him to his own home—an ordinary apartment-house within a few blocks of one of the west side ferries.

I had seen him enter the house and had heard the door bolted behind him; and then I had turned to retrace my steps. The night was still and pitchy dark. The street was deserted, except for now and then some belated wayfarer, and silent except for the infrequent rumble of taxicab or car in the intersecting avenues.

Half-way down the block there was a sudden, sharp rattle of wheels behind me, and then a jumble of grating tires, as if the equipage was being stopped almost beside me.

I instinctively stopped, with a hand upon a pretty toy I always carry in my hip pocket. I had a notion something unpleasant might be designed against myself, as the neighborhood was rather lonely, and a detective is considered a legitimate target for assault by the class whose deeds it is his mission to bring to the light of justice. But I rapidly reflected that I could not have been recognized, as I was disguised for the occasion in a scrubby, black beard, and in the brown jean jumper and overalls of a laborer. And just then, too, the shriek of a girl rang out upon the night, and there was the noise of a struggle on the farther side of the stopped equipage.

"My dear, are you hurt? You might have killed yourself attempting to jump from the car, while we were driving at that rate," said a man's tones, slow, level and soft as the purr of a panther might be.

There was no answer.

In the gleam of the street lamp I could see the girl lying like one dead on the asphalt, her loosened hair spreading like a rippling sheet of burnished copper over her bosom and all about her shoulders, her face—beautiful beyond portrayal—upturned and ghastly white. Even as the man bent over her and took a limp hand in his anxious clasp he flashed about him a rapid glance which might have been either of apprehension or of a desire for assistance.

He quickly perceived me standing by the curb.

Somehow I fancied he noted my unkempt beard and my patched, jean garments; and I fancied, too, his countenance at the instant changed from dread to relief.

"I wish you would come here a minute, my good fellow," he said, in the same soft, level tones. "This lady has fainted, and I should like to get her into the car as easily as possible."

"Faith, then, and it's more sense she would have had to do the fainting before she jumped from the sate of the gasolene buggy," I remarked, with as much Hibernian brogue as I could muster. "It's crazy the swate young lady must be enthirely. Is it your wife she is now, if I may be bold of the asking?"

"She soon will be," the man answered, with an unreserved confidence which did not especially commend him to my admiration. "She was taken ill at a party we were attending together, and our friends thought I had best drive home with her. I had not noticed she was becoming delirious until she suddenly sprang up beside me and hurled herself from the automobile."

"And have ye the far to go, then, if you don't mind excusing the question?" I said, as I held the door open while he lifted the girl back to the seat, and then placed himself beside her.

"Well, yes, I have," said he, supporting her with one arm and with the other hand taking the steering wheel, displaying as he did so a curiously set yellow diamond ring. "But she is already reviving, and I dare say the drive will quite restore her. I am obliged to you," he added, so he dropped the wheel long enough to toss me a quarter.

He nodded a civil good night, then headed for the ferry.

The man seemed to be a person of means and respectability; and at the time the incident did not strike me as being so extraordinary. Anyhow, there had been nothing with which I had the authority to interfere! But all the same I was persuaded his explanation had not included the whole truth. And moreover there was in his appearance an undefinable something which was the reverse of agreeable to me.

With his symmetrical proportions and regular features, most people would have pronounced him a fine-looking man. But there were unpleasing lines upon the sallow forehead beneath the scant and sleek paly auburn hair; beneath the fastidiously trimmed mustache the mouth showed flabby and coarse; his eyes were of a yellowish gray, small and not unaffectedly expressive; his sallow hands were long and thin, and the fingers had a peculiarly tapering downward curve like the claws of the feline genus.

The very ring he wore suggested something subtle and uncanny! It was a twisted cord of gold, set with a triangle of black enamel, from which two big yellow diamonds glittered like the eyes of certain animals in the dark.

"I shall know him again, wherever or whenever we may chance to meet," I thought, as I once more started homeward.

Late as it was, some one was waiting for me at my house. As I doffed my disguising beard and brown jean and entered the snug room I had set apart as a private office, a tall young man arose from his chair, bowed, and then remained standing, as if deferring to my convenience whether to afford him an interview or not. A vivid color, as swift and sensitive as the blush of a girl, flushed his dark face as I, perhaps rather searchingly, regarded him.

"You think you ought to know me, but you can't quite place me," he said in the most musical, and yet the most mournful, voice to which I had ever listened. "Perhaps I have been familiarized to you by the illustrations of the city dailies recently!—I am Maurice Lenan!"

"Ah!" I said inquiringly, and with considerable more surprise than I should have cared to manifest. But I could place him readily enough now.

A few weeks previous every newspaper, journal, and magazine in the city had devoted more or less space to picture or to describe the individuality of Maurice Lenan.

He had been indicted for the murder of a wealthy old gentleman, whose only daughter he loved, and who had opposed their marriage.

The young man had proudly and firmly declared his innocence; the evidence which had been sufficient to indict him had been deficient to convict him, and after suffering an imprisonment of months he had been tried only to be acquitted, not, however, without a prolonged disagreement of the jury and the obvious disapprobation of the judge.

"I am dishonored, branded, just the same as if I had been proven guilty," he said to me. "To clear myself before the world the real assassin must be unearthed. And I have come to you because I wish to engage your services in detecting the real assassin of Gabriel Ostnire."

"Was the testimony against you so damaging as all that?" said I.

"It was so damaging I marvel I have not already been hung," he answered, candidly. "We quarreled on that fatal night—we had bitter words, too—blows would have been struck had I not bethought myself of his age and of my love for Violanthe, and so I precipitately ran away and left him alone in the grounds, where he was discovered an hour later, his life ended by either the wound upon his forehead or by the shock which had accelerated some obscure heart trouble."

"It was the doctor's doubts which saved you," said I.

"Not a bit of it," Maurice answered, with bitter candor. "The jury chanced to have scruples about convicting on circumstantial evidence, no matter what their own opinions might be. My only brother has no doubts of my guilt, and has driven me from him as if I were a leper. Violanthe, too—my promised wife—believes her father's blood is on my soul."

The young man bowed his head upon his hands, and his whole frame shook with passionate agitation. And, detective though I was, for an instant the sight of that strong young fellow in such anguish almost unmanned me. When he presently again lifted his head his eyes were bloodshot, and his handsome face was like that of a corpse.

"Before the hue and cry was raised, it was she who accused me—Violanthe, for whom I would have given my life," he continued, in a husky and shaking voice. "The fishermen, coming through the grounds from the bay, had discovered the body and alarmed the house; the entire household was hurrying to the fatal spot; the housekeeper and chauffeur were already there, when Violanthe rushed forward, bent over her dead parent, and uttered the shriek: 'Oh, Maurice! am I the cause of this?' Then her eyes met mine, as I, too, approached the place, and she fainted. In the horror of that moment, accused by the being I loved most, I stammered and recoiled, as if I were indeed guilty."

"But she did not testify against you at the trial," said I.

"She did not testify one way nor the other—she did not appear at all," he returned, in a voice alike dreary and passionate. "Violanthe has never been the same since that night. She was too ill to appear even if my brother would not have managed to spare her the pain of having done so."

"Where is Miss Ostnire?" I asked him. "There is a possibility of my wanting to have a talk with her before I have done with the case."

"Under the circumstances I have not presumed to inquire," Maurice answered, with a sigh. "The New Jersey place on the bay was deserted immediately after the tragedy. It is already going fast to ruin, and now has the reputation of being haunted. Violanthe is, I think, residing somewhere in the city. You can ascertain, I presume, from my brother, who is appointed her guardian."

"Suppose I begin proceedings by taking a look over the old place—you accompanying me?" said I.

"Agreed! I'm with you," he said, as we parted for the night.

"Come around in the morning, then—seven o'clock sharp," I said to him, as he went down the steps of my house.

Something later than that hour in the forenoon of the next day we boarded a car for the Twenty-third street ferry. As we left the car and walked toward the ferry-house I heard the young man gasp, pantingly, like one in physical pain.

As I glanced at him I saw his face had become as white as a sheet, and that his dark eyes were fixed upon a person who had just left the ferry-house and was coming toward us. My glance involuntarily followed his gaze, and I beheld the elegant gentleman of the soft tones and yellowish gray eyes whom I had assisted in a certain emergency of the previous night.

"Do you know who he is—the man wearing that curious ring with the two big yellow diamonds?" I asked Maurice.

"He is my brother—the brother who repudiates me," the young fellow said, in a voice husky with pain.

PART TWO

MAURICE LENAN—whom the world held to be a criminal, unconvicted only because of insufficient evidence, or perhaps a faulty method of sifting the same—had enlisted all my sympathies. I felt convinced he was as innocent as a babe of the offense which had been charged against him, and was waxing enthusiastic in my desire to right him among his fellow-men and in the sight of the girl he loved.

"I think I have seen Miss Ostnire—only last evening, in fact—driving with your brother," I said to him while we were on our way to the deserted New Jersey residence. "Is she not tall and slim and queenly, with a fleece of rippling hair the tint of burnished copper?"

"It was Violanthe, no doubt," he replied.

"Has she money? Was there much property to be inherited from her unfortunate father?" I went on.

"The property is something immense," Maurice replied. "But it was not because Violanthe is an heiress that her father objected to me—I have some money of my own. But I seemed to have had an enemy who had insinuated to him that I was a spendthrift—a plausible deceiver, and only Heaven knows what else," he added, bitterly.

"Your brother, however, was quite a favorite with Mr. Ostnire, wasn't he?" I asked.

"Oh, Rufus was his right-hand man; my brother managed all his business affairs, and had his entire confidence," Maurice said, without the slightest jealousy perceptible in voice or manner.

We had left the railway at a small and obscure station less than a mile distant from the homestead where Mr. Ostnire and his daughter had lived with an old housekeeper and a couple of servants. The house itself was midway between the high-road and a thickly wooded bend of the scraggy bay coast. A quaint and rude wooden gate wide enough to admit two automobiles abreast opened from the road into a long and winding lane which was flanked by irregular rows of gnarly fruit trees, and which led to the house.

"The place has a sort of sleeping palace aspect, hasn't it?" I said to Maurice, who was looking thoughtfully upon the familiar scenery.

"It always had that," he responded. "Mr. Ostnire preferred a secluded life, and he was too miserly to spend much money in improving the house and grounds. The

central portion of the building with the peaked roof was once a church, erected beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant. There is a story of grave vaults being beneath the foundations of the Dutch chimney, which was added when the wings were built. With the neglect and decay, and later tragedy, superstitious people have plenty of material with which to manufacture ghosts for the place."

"But the story of grave vaults and ghosts doesn't seem to prevent the neighbors from taking a short cut through the grounds, though," I remarked, as I espied a country lassie crossing a corner of the inclosure.

"She was one of the house-maids named Janey; she lives in that cottage we passed up the road. It may be she has the keys and will permit us an inside inspection of the premises," said Maurice, nodding pleasantly to the girl, who was advancing toward us.

She was a homely little thing, lank and awkward, with an untidy queue of towy hair falling down the straight back of her limp gown, and with a coarse sort of dusting cap shading her freckled and angular features.

"No, I hain't got the keys, Mr. Maurice; and if I had you wouldn't be no better off," she averred with the Simon-pure dialect and pertness of a rural serving-maid. "I wouldn't go breaking into folks' houses, not to please you nor nobody else."

"I think you are afraid of the ghost, Miss Janey," said I, laughing.

"Ghost!" she repeated with a grimace meant to express immense contempt.

But the grimace abruptly changed to an expression of grotesque consternation. For at the instant a strange sound rose and fell upon the peaceful air. It was a sound as of a woman praying, sobbing, moaning—not noisily, but in hushed and despairing murmurs. It seemed to issue somewhere from within those massive walls of mildewed stone and moldering timbers; and instantly we all looked fixedly at the house, and stood watching and listening.

The house had been unoccupied for twelve months or more. Every door and window was closed and boarded, and the gates were padlocked, and that any living creature could be within those empty rooms seemed impossible.

But there it was again—that plaintive weeping—the unmistakable sobbing of a woman somewhere near us.

"Some one is inside in distress! What is to be done?" said Maurice, turning to me.

"There is a possibility of being mistaken; the sound may be from some part of the grounds," I answered as I walked toward a farther corner of the building, where I fancied the sound might be more distinct.

Instead, however, it became less and less audible, and finally ceased altogether. As I turned back I heard a dull ringing clash, and saw the serving-girl standing among the rank shrubbery at the rear of the house, watching some operation which Maurice had in progress. I quickened my steps in their direction, and beheld him tugging wildly at the iron pickets which guarded the vault-like entrance to the cellars. With a madman's strength he had wrenched away one rusted picket, and his face was pallid with excitement as with bleeding fingers he was tugging anew at another.

"It is Violanthe we heard. She is a prisoner in this house," he called to me.

I scarcely knew whether to feel astonished or not. Certainly during the entire day I had entertained not a few suspicions of my own. And all my surmises had been connected with the incident of the previous night.

Was the girl who jumped from the limousine Violanthe Ostnire? Was she delirious, or had she taken the desperate leap to escape from the man in whose care or power she was? And that the man was Rufus Lenan I now, of course, knew.

My attention was diverted by Janey, who suddenly made a downward grab with her lank, tanned fingers, and picked up something she had just espied among the rank weeds and grass.

"Oh, say, if we ain't just lucky!" she exclaimed in her pert and yet drawing fashion, as she exhibited a large iron key, crusted with red rust. "And it came along just in the nick of time to save spoiling the gate, too. So take it —there!" she finished, as she flung it toward Maurice, whose lacerated hands seemed to her of far less consideration than the gate, which he would have spoiled without scruple.

Meanwhile, the weird sobbing and praying had entirely ceased, and the whole house was as silent as a tomb.

"But Violanthe is here somewhere. She spoke my name —I heard her as plainly as I now hear my own voice," the excited young fellow declared, as he fitted the key in the lock and forced back the rusted bolt.

"If she is, she never entered by this passage," I thought, as I noted the unbroken cobwebs floating before the stairs, and the unstirred dust of the steps and flooring.

It was not yet sundown, but all above the stairs was Egyptian darkness. But I chanced to have a parcel of wax tapers, which obviated that difficulty, and presently we were exploring every nook and cranny of the building. The girl Janey had followed us as far as the main hall; but it was plain she altogether disapproved of the expedition, for presently, with a dubious shake of the towy queue and toss of the dusting cap, she retreated and left us to ourselves.

We traversed corridor after corridor, and peered into room after room, but we discovered nothing, only blank emptiness and the silence of the grave. Step by step Maurice looked more bewildered, and when every chamber, closet, and corner had been searched, he was shaking as with an ague.

"I could have sworn she was here," was his puzzled remark, as we descended the stairs of the old-fashioned cellar and came forth through the vault-like passage.

What my own opinion was I did not inform him at that juncture. But I had determined to suggest his return to the city and to pursue my investigations alone.

I had a notion there might be some startling developments before night was over, and he was much too excitable to be of assistance where a cool head and steady nerves are of paramount importance. However, the suggestion seemed a relief to him.

"I am glad you require no more; the old place arouses memories which half madden me," he said, when I at length parted with him at the steps of his car just as the train was starting.

I lingered at the station platform until the train steamed away; and then I strolled leisurely back to the house, where I had resolved to spend the night. I am not superstitious, and am not a coward, and I was convinced that a vigil in the deserted dwelling would effect some interesting disclosures. In the late dusk I entered the house through the vault-like passage of the cellar; and lighting my way by my convenient electric flashlight, I ensconced myself in a room which had a single long and low French window, opening, as I had supposed, directly upon the grounds.

But I thought a little extra examination might not be amiss, and so I drew back the heavy tapestry curtains and unfastened the casements which swung easily toward me for the fraction of an inch, and then remained stationary.

Through the crevice I perceived the casements were padlocked upon the other side, and that the window itself

opened into a narrow extension room which we had not searched, and which must have a door of exit apart from the main passage of the house.

Of course Maurice could not have surmised the existence of such a room, nor of such a passage—although it was probably only a veranda, roofed and sided into an extension apartment, as is often done in these rambling old country houses. Through the chink I could see only the dim outlines of sundry articles of furniture; but I knew the room had an occupant. At irregular intervals I could hear a sighing breath like that of a child grieving in its sleep; I could hear the rustle, too, of drapery as the sleeper fitfully and uneasily stirred in restless slumber.

"Maurice was right after all," I thought as I noiselessly and cautiously adjusted the casements and hangings, and settled myself for a patient vigil.

I had not long to wait.

Presently a man's tread—stealthily through habit rather than from any fear of the occasion, I fancied—sounded on the mildewed flagging outside; then a bolt clicked in its socket, a door creaked on its hinges, and somebody advanced into the extension room. The clicking and creaking awoke the sleeper, who uttered a little scared and piteous cry.

"It is I," the man said in slow, soft, level tones; "I have come to take you away, dear."

"You frighten me! Why did you bring me here in the night? Why did you lock me in the room like a prisoner? Where would you take me?" said a girl's voice—a voice exquisitely sweet and unutterably sad.

"I know what is best for you, love; and I shall be gentle with you if you will only submit quietly to what is a necessity," the man said.

"I will not go with you; you have terrified me with your mysteries; leave me to myself," the girl replied.

"I do not wish to terrify you, dear; but come with me you must," the man answered in tones soft, still, but inexorable as fate. "I have arranged everything; I have a coupé at the end of the lane; before midnight you will be my wife and then I shall feel safe—I shall feel that no other can take you from me! Will you yield now, dear, or must I keep you my captive a little while longer? There, lean on my arm, or must I carry you like a baby?" he added, as the girl seemed to struggle from him.

Instantly my plan was formed.

With caution and without noise I left the room and the house, and hastened to the end of the lane where the horse was haltered in the dense shadows of a clump of trees. To unbuckle the halter-strap from the animal's neck and to slip the reins over one of my wrists was the work of a moment. I had just stepped back into the convenient shade, when the man came through the wide wooden gate, the girl beside him, weeping bitterly. As they approached the coupé she shrank back and turned as if to flee. But in an instant he had caught her and lifted her like a feather to the seat.

"I warn you not to attempt any gymnastic caprices tonight, my love," said he, taking a step forward and reaching for reins and halter-strap.

Then I sprang upon him and gripped him by the throat.

My act had been so sudden and violent that I had hurled him backward upon the ground, and had sprung into the coupé before he realized what was happening.

The horse served me well, for we were away like the wind and a good half mile up the high-road before he had struggled to his feet or regained breath enough for the furious protest I knew he dared not shout after me.

PART THREE

I HAD no need to assure the girl that she was safe, for she seemed instinctively to understand that I meant only to protect her. When I had first darted from the shadows and pounced upon the man, she had uttered a little scared outcry, but immediately resumed her seat, trembling, but composed, and had behaved quite like a heroine.

"Where would you prefer I should take you? Have you friends you can trust?" I asked her, when at length I allowed the chestnut to slacken speed, and we were bowling more leisurely along.

"I have none," she replied, piteously.

"I think I will take you home with me. You can stay with my wife until we can get a more agreeable guardian for your person and property," said I.

"My property?" said she. "I am penniless."

"That is strange," I observed. "Your father was surely a wealthy gentleman."

"He speculated; he did not always succeed; at the last he was totally bankrupt," she returned.

"Your guardian speculated too," said I. "In the beginning he was not so prosperous; now he has plenty. Was the one robbed that the other might be enriched?"

"I can't understand," she replied. "I only know I have been dependant upon Rufus for the very food I have eaten. And he was kind to me until he wanted to marry me—and I couldn't do that!"

Violanthe had the simplicity and inexperience of a child, and in fact she was scarcely more than that. Tall and queenly as she was, she was little more than seventeen; she had been educated by private teachers in the seclusion of the lonely Ostnire residence, and was quite ignorant of the ways and wiles of the busy world.

"Maurice has been acquitted," I said to her after a pause, during which I was driving rapidly along an unfrequented cross-road which much shortened the rather lengthy journey I had undertaken.

"I knew he would be; I knew he was innocent," she said.

"He thinks you believe otherwise," I told her. "I do not wish to pain you, Miss Ostnire, but it was your unguarded exclamation over your father's dead body which excited suspicion against him in the beginning."

"Poor papa had some heart trouble. He was subject to singular spasms, succeeded by fits of insensibility alarmingly prolonged. Agitation of any kind was bad for him. I thought it was the anger of knowing Maurice and I were betrothed which had killed him," Violanthe explained in a choking voice.

"And afterward, when you knew there had been foul play, what did you think? What did you suspect?" I queried.

"I did not think at all," she faltered through a rush of tears. I was distracted with grief and ill for a long time. My guardian brought me to a nice quiet boarding-house in New York. He hired an amiable old lady to nurse me, and kept everybody away who might distress me by allusions to my bereavement. And there I stayed until the other day, when my guardian began to frighten me with his persisting I must marry him. Rufus seemed to change somehow when he learned his brother was acquitted," she added, simply.

Violanthe seemed to have no actual distrust of her guardian. She was only averse to becoming his wife. She believed his kindness had been disinterested, and just what any one would have done in similar circumstances. But I had my own opinion on the subject.

I reached the city without being intercepted by any telegram or telephone message, charging me with the theft of

a chestnut, a stylish coupé, and an irresponsible young lady, as I had half conjectured might be the result of my adventure, and drove straight to my own house, transferred Miss Ostnire to the care of my wife, and, then turned the chestnut toward the nearest police station. There I forestalled any possible unpleasantness by explaining to the sergeant as much of the matter as I deemed advisable, and then I went home to plan my programme for the morrow.

My next procedure in the case was to ascertain what transactions there had been financially between the late Mr. Ostnire and his confidential man of business. By considerable diligent research I learned that everything, even the Ostnire real estate, had been vested in the title of Rufus Lenan. Unless there had been trickery and forgeries, cunningly designed and executed with incredible skill, Violanthe was indeed penniless.

And if she had been defrauded by such means I could not determine how she was to be righted, now her father was in his grave, for he alone could prove or disprove the honesty of the man he had trusted to the uttermost.

Had Rufus Lenan—the elegant gentleman with the slow, soft tones and the lazy, yellowish, gray eyes—was he the criminal for whose offense his brother had been indicted and acquitted?

"It begins to look like it," I was thinking one morning a few days later, as I went into the Central Office at that time.

"Have you heard anything about the Parchol case? Queerest blunder in the annals," was the salute of a fellow-detective.

"No; what is it?" I inquired.

"Well, of course you remember Parchol—a lively old guy of eighty put himself into the noose of holy matrimony with a spring chicken in the twenties?" said he.

"I can't say I do," I confessed.

"What! have you forgotten how the metropolitan reporters squandered hogsheads of precious ink in describing the ravishing dimples and celestial blushes of the beggar maid who was arraigned for poisoning her Cophetua?"

"I am afraid I have," I admitted.

"Well, the long and the short of the affair was," he continued, "Parchol's relatives thought he had money, and they claimed to think his young wife had given him a dose of pulverized glass, or poured melted lead in his ears, or something of the kind. They had her arrested as a husband-murderess, anyhow. She was bailed, though, and will never be tried, probably, as the relatives discovered that the old bird had been the possessor of nothing but one very small pension and several very large pretensions."

"Well?" I said, as he paused, as if intending to devote himself exclusively to his cigar.

"Oh, the best is to be told," he resumed composedly. "The relatives demanded that the body of Parchol be exhumed; the authorities complied, and the body was disinterred from the grave supposed to be his. But there had been a blunder somewhere, for they had resurrected a newly-buried man who was not dead at all, but in a trance."

"Is that all?" said I. "Or shall I take care of your cigar until the story is finished?"

"I would trust you with my life, but not with my cigar," he avowed knowingly. Then he again continued: "The men who were engaged with the job were frightened out of their wits. In their confusion and haste to make the resurrected individual comfortable, they did not delay to make any inquiries; they filled up the grave, which had as yet no headstone to reveal his identity, and then conveyed him to the nearest hospital."

"Oh, spin it out as long as you like," I interpolated indulgently, as he stopped again for another pull and puff from his provokingly excellent cigar.

"The man had sustained a wound upon the forehead which induced a total loss of memory," my fellow detective again resumed. "He was sane enough, though, to elude the vigilance of the hospital guards; then he wandered somehow to this city, and while roaming, sick and bewildered, through the streets, a patrolman noticed his condition and he was again taken to the hospital. The treatment there has benefited him; and he is recovered—at least, sufficiently to know his own name!"

"But where does the queer blunder come in?" I asked.

"Why, the whole thing is a tissue of blunders—of the most stupid and preposterous blunders," was the answer. "The man was presumed to have been murdered! In fact, the scar upon his forehead shows two marks, as if the blow was dealt by a hand wearing a ring set with two peculiarly hard and sharply cut stones; and besides, his daughter's lover was indicted and narrowly escaped being convicted for the crime. Just fancy what sort of inquest must have been held in such a case as that? Certainly truth is stranger than fiction! And Gabriel Ostnire, at least, can indorse the proverb."

I sprang to my feet so precipitately that the speaker dropped his cigar in his wonder.

"Old Gabe Ostnire! By all that is miraculous!" I ejaculated. "Is he able to leave the hospital?"

"I believe so. But what on earth do you want of him?" was the inquisitive question.

I did not wait to enlighten him, but hurried from the office, and a half-hour later was speeding toward the hospital as fast as a willing taxicab could carry me.

Early that evening, just as I had succeeded in reuniting a sociable little party of three in the small parlor of my own house, there was a mild, slow ring of the front door-bell.

Something impelled me to attend the bell myself. I stepped into the hall, and closed the parlor door behind me. And then I turned to admit Rufus Lenan, whom I ushered into the snug room I used as a private office.

"I have need of detective ability, and the chief recommended I should come to you," he announced, in his soft, level tones, as he stepped inside, his immaculate silk hat in one hand, the other, with his cane, thrust negligently in a pocket of his elegant fall overcoat.

"Detective ability is not needed to solve the problem of the Ostnire tragedy—if you refer to that," I said, sternly, as I bent to raise the lowered light of the lamp on my office table.

A startled expression distorted his sallow features, but there was defiance rather than fear in the yellow-gray eyes he uneasily averted.

"I do not refer to the murder," he said, haughtily. "I should shrink from discussing a subject which causes me unspeakable sorrow; for, after all, the misguided young man who undoubtedly committed the crime is my brother. What I wish is to engage your services in finding Miss Ostnire, who has mysteriously disappeared."

"Ah, I see," was my only comment.

"I have traced her as far as a New Jersey village near her old home; she was driving in a coupé behind a noticeably fine chestnut; but I have failed to trace her farther," he said, with his mild and honest air.

"Such a turnout was left at an extremely early hour the other morning at the police station in the next block," I informed him; "and a noticeably fine ring dropped from the folds of the lap-rug," said I, taking from a drawer of my table the curiously-twisted circlet set with the two yellow diamonds.

I had discovered it in the coupé the night I had appropriated the equipage. With a momentary expression of sullen fear he stretched forth a sallow hand, and clutched it in his tapering, claw-like fingers.

"That ring has a story," I proceeded, mercilessly; "it was worn on the hand which struck old Mr. Ostnire. Now his wound has healed, the scars show two indentations matching precisely those two big yellow diamonds."

He winced as if under a whip lash; his whole attitude and aspect expressed an agony of terror. There is no profit in torturing a caged wild beast, and there ought be no pleasure.

So I quietly spoke a few words in an undertone to my wife, who was just then passing through the hall. And before Rufus Lenan fully comprehended his situation she had motioned his brother and Mr. Ostnire into the room.

Maurice fixed a look of grieved and speechless wonder upon the man who had so foully wronged him, and then he covered his dark face with his hands and groaned aloud. But Mr. Ostnire was not so pitiful. His wrinkled old visage quivered with wrath as he scathingly denounced the traitor whom he once trusted.

"Because your trickery had been exposed you would have destroyed me," he said. "Then, when you believed the deed was done, you would have shifted your guilt upon another. But I shall spare you not one jot nor tithe of the punishment you deserve."

Rufus had sat listlessly and more listlessly toying with the curious ring; once he had lifted the triangle of black enamel and pressed it to his lips; otherwise, he had seemed dozing in his chair, rather than listening to the wrathful speech of the man who had risen from the grave to denounce him. But gradually his sallow features had blanched to a greenish ashen pallor; and suddenly we all became conscious that there was something ghastly in his indifference. Then Maurice took a step forward and gazed earnestly at him.

"He has passed to the punishment of another world," the young man said solemnly.

The scoundrel had indeed ended his life before our very eyes; and the curious ring had been the instrument of his self-destruction. It was probably an antique trinket from the East Indies. Beneath the black triangle was a cavity which yet contained a few minute crystals of an odd golden transparency, and these were of some deadly poison unknown to modern chemistry. How or where Rufus got it no one knew, and no one ever cared to inquire.

Possibly he had apprehended some such contingency since Maurice was acquitted; for if his brother should learn the whole truth and determine a just revenge, even a marriage with Violanthe would not have shielded him.

Maurice and the beautiful Violanthe were married a few months after the criminal had been consigned to an unhonored grave.

HAYTI'S BURIED TREASURE

IN view of our recent seizure of the governmental functions of the little West Indian republic of Hayti, it is interesting to observe that here is a land of buried treasure of the kind we read about in the stories of the old Spanish conquerers. Nor is this treasure of the disappointing, story-book kind. It is actual silver and gold Spanish money.

About a century ago, when a fabulously rich French colony in Hayti was threatened with annihilation by its million negro slaves, the landholders deposited their tangible wealth in gold and silver in hiding places about their estates. Later a French army of 60,000 veterans, which was sent over to restore order in the island, was practically defeated by the negroes. In all 70,000 soldiers and colonists died of disease and the sword, leaving scarcely a remnant of the white race.

The magnificent palaces and gardens and parks were soon either destroyed outright in vengeance, or were occupied by the negro warriors and reduced to a sad semblance of their former grandeur. To-day there remain only the ruined foundations of what were formerly vast palaces. The fountains are choked with rubbish, and a few scattered sculptures alone record the story of past grandeur.

The gold, which was buried, was left behind. As the white men were killed and the few who escaped never returned, the secret of its hiding places was never revealed.

Only in isolated instances has the buried treasure of the French been discovered. However, it is quite common to find old Spanish gold doubloons, dating from 1756 to 1795, being passed from hand to hand in Hayti. These are in a state of perfect preservation, practically uncirculated, showing that they have been buried almost since the time they were minted. They are indeed beautiful coins, with the design of the coat of arms of the Carolus kings on the reverse and the likeness of the kings on the obverse.

The modern Haytian peasant is densely ignorant. The manager of the French bank in Port au Prince, the capital city, tells of an occurrence in which a Haytian peasant started in from the country with an earthen jar full of gold which he had discovered by accident. On his way he told people of the shiny contents of his jar. As luck would have it, he fell into the hands of a Syrian merchant, who offered him 600 gourdes, the equivalent of $100 in our money, for the contents of the jar.

In another authentic instance a native laborer who was working on an old country estate clearing up underbrush for the owner came upon an old piece of chain on the ground, so rusted that it fell to pieces under his shovel. Out of curiosity he dug along, following the bits of broken links until the chain led him abruptly downward. He kept on digging until he came to a large flat slab of rock too big for a lazy Haytian to lift.

At this juncture he shouldered his spade and went into the house of the owner, casually telling him what he had seen. The owner sensed the possibility of a find. He roundly cursed the laborer, paid him his day's wage and discharged him, saying that he had placed the chain there himself. In the night the owner went to the place indicated, lifted the slab and underneath it found a hollow space in which was a rusted strong box of ancient pattern. Eagerly he burst the flimsy lid and beheld a mass of gold coins, slightly tarnished to be sure, but gold just the same. His daughters were later sent to France for their education.

The routine of the old French aristocrats in burying their gold reserves seems to have been similar to that of Captain Kidd. They forced two slaves to dig a deep hole, deposited the earthen pot or iron casket in the bottom at night, and personally slaughtered the natives on top of the gold, like the crust on a pie. The depression was then filled in and covered with sod or stones. Present day Haytians are loyal enough to their color to believe that all the gold buried under murdered slaves is polluted and will bring misfortune for all posterity to the finder.

THE TENERLEY CASE

By HENRY LEWIS

"TERRY, here is something stirring for you," the inspector said to one of his detectives when he sent to investigate the Tenerley case.

His duties had been the reverse of "stirring" for some time, and he was not sorry to be detained for something spiced with an animating element.

And Maloney was not long in ascertaining that the Tenerley case was all it had foretokened to be, and a good deal more besides.

The deceased, Mr. Tenerley, was a retired commission merchant of considerable wealth, and he had lived in a commodious residence in East 79th street.

He was rather aged and somewhat feeble; but he had gone to his bed-chamber in ordinary health on that fatal night. At the usual breakfast hour he did not appear, and after a little delay a servant went into his room through his always unlocked door, and found him lying lifeless. He slept in a large apartment with windows almost on a level with the grounds; one of these windows had been broken open; a small safe had been opened and its contents ransacked; and there were indications that the old gentleman had been strangled or suffocated to prevent his outcries.

When Jerry arrived on the scene of the tragedy the dead man was lying as when first discovered, and nothing about the room had been altered or disturbed. It needed but a glance to satisfy his experienced eye that the foul work was not the doing of a professional burglar, and that plunder had not been the motive of the crime. Firstly, the safe had been unlocked in the regular method, and several thousand dollars in bank-notes were untouched in one of the ransacked compartments. Secondly, the window which fastened by the simplest sort of catch had been broken open from the inside; and of course such a procedure could have been only a device—and a glaringly stupid one—to divert suspicion from the rightful track.

His household consisted of a young niece who was the mistress of the house, a young nephew who acted as his private secretary, and two servants of whose guiltlessness there could be no question.

"I infer Miss Felix, the niece, and Mr. De Latto, the nephew, are his heirs," Maloney said to the lawyer who had been Mr. Tenerley's adviser and life-long friend.

"There was a will to that effect, I think," was the answer. "But he contemplated canceling it and dictating another. Indeed, it was by his appointment and for the purpose of drawing up such a document I came here to-day only to find him like this—poor Tenerley!" he added with emotion.

"Had he confided to you the disposition he intended making of his property—and was any other person aware of his intentions?" inquired the detective.

It had occurred to Jerry that there might be some person who would have desired to prevent the canceling of the old will and the making of a new.

"Well, yes," the lawyer replied, candidly. "Poor Tenerley was never reticent about his affairs. We all knew Miss Felix was to have the larger bulk of his property; but it was his wish for her to become the wife of his nephew, who is ardently attached to her."

"And she had attached her own affections elsewhere, perhaps," Maloney remarked at random.

"She had a girlish fancy at one time, I believe, for Wallace Irving—a young man of excellent birth and education, who acted as private secretary to my friend, until Mr. De Latto chose to undertake the responsibility. But she would have yielded to her uncle's wishes eventually, I think; she would have realized the folly of her preference for a lover who was held in disfavor."

"So there was enmity between Mr. Irving and your deceased friend?" said Jerry.

"I hope you do not regard the servants' gossip as of any importance?" the lawyer said, dissentingly. "There were hard words—even threatening words between them, perhaps; but so there were between Miss Felix and her uncle. It was only a little domestic unpleasantness, of no consequence in the case whatever. I hope you do not purpose dragging the members of the family into your investigations of a crime which was undoubtedly perpetrated by some prowling vagrant."

"I should regret any necessity of doing so," the officer said laconically.

But that Mr. Tenerley had met his death at the hands of some one familiar with the house he was convinced.

And he thought he had the whole case in a nutshell. Here was Maloney's hypothesis:

Some person had determined to possess himself of something kept in the safe; he had secreted himself in the house, and perhaps in the room. After the old gentleman had fallen asleep he had taken the bunch of keys Mr. Tenerley always placed at night, with watch and wallet, beneath a pillow of the bed. Then he had unlocked the safe and secured the article—whatever it was—he wanted.

But at the moment Mr. Tenerley had awakened. Startled, fearing recognition, or, perhaps, already recognized, the noctural marauder had sprung upon the helpless victim, clutched him by the throat, and smothered his outcries by the heavy pillow. Then, when the old gentleman had ceased to struggle, the assailant had fled through the broken window. In his flight he had dropped a glove upon the sod beneath the casement, and that glove was no trivial clue.

It was of pale, yellow kid, stitched down the back in black ribbing, and it had certainly fitted the hand of somebody other than a prowling vagrant. The detective's suspicion was directing itself against Wallace Irving; and yet he could not help believing the will was the article for which the contents of the safe had been ransacked. And he could not understand how his interests could be affected by either the old will or the new one.

Jerry's investigations had consumed the greater part of the afternoon, and it was nearly dark when he left the house. There was a short cut through the grounds to the L station, and after a moment of deliberation, he concluded to take the shorter path, rough as it was and leading, as it did, across a disagreeably-located lot. He had reached the edge of the grounds, and was passing a clump of out-

lying shrubbery, when he heard a suppressed groan; and as he stopped, he saw the figure of a man, dark and distinct, against the light of the early moon just then rising.

He was sitting on a fragment of timber, his head bowed upon his hands, his attitude that of misery, abject and agonizing.

A detective is often guided by his instincts; anyhow, it was instinct which impelled Jerry just then.

He drew from an inner pocket the glove he had picked up beneath the broken window, and, advancing, extended it toward the man.

"Is not this yours?" said Maloney.

"Yes, it is mine," said he, lifting his head and mechanically putting out his hand to take it.

But Jerry drew it back.

"Can you explain how it came beneath the window of the old gentleman who was murdered last night?" he demanded, abruptly.

"Yes, I can if I choose," he admitted, wearily rather than defiantly. The officer gazed at him for a moment in silence.

"You are Wallace Irving. I am convinced you know something of this crime. I am afraid I shall have to take you in custody," he said, at a venture.

With a movement which was more of dignity than of fear, he readily arose to his feet.

"I am prepared to go with you," he said, slowly. "I shall not attempt to refute any charge which may be brought against me."

His stoic manner and the bitter despair of his voice amazed the detective.

All at once it struck Jerry that this man was innocent, that he had sealed his lips to shield another, and that he would maintain his stubborn reticence to the end, even if he should go to the electric chair by so doing.

And it struck Jerry, too, the person for whom he would be most likely to sacrifice reputation and perhaps life could only be the woman he loved, and that woman was Mattie Felix.

"If I could only bring the two face to face unexpectedly, an unguarded word from either of them might explain the enigma and put me on the track of the criminal," pondered the officer.

A detective is not usually deficient in the way of manufacturing expedients, and Jerry was not long in projecting how he should effect a meeting between the two.

That night he had Wallace Irving detained in the prison as an important witness in the Tenerley case; and the next morning presented himself at the house in 79th street.

A servant ushered him into a cozy sitting-room of which both Miss Felix and her cousin happened at the moment to be occupants.

"I trust I am not exceeding the strict demands of duty," he began boldly to Mr. De Latto. "But if Miss Felix and yourself can spare me an hour or two you will be furthering the ends of justice. I took into custody last night an individual whom I detected loitering just outside the grounds. I am satisfied he is connected with this melancholy affairs; and if you will come with me, perhaps you may be able to identify him."

Mr. De Latto looked rather surprised, and his cousin indifferent; but neither seemed to regard such a measure as extraordinary.

And so it happened that an hour later Miss Felix, her cousin and Jerry, were admitted into a corridor of the prison where Wallace Irving was detained. The detective whispered a word of instruction to the officer in charge, and then seated himself where he could best witness the meeting.

Miss Felix preferred to remain standing; she still maintained her look of indifference; but there was something in the changing curves of her coral mouth and in the smoldering flame of her large, black eyes which belied her passive calm.

De Latto hovered near her, and his air impressed me as being singularly forced and uneasy.

Presently a spiritless tread echoed upon the stone floor of an intersecting corridor.

At the sound Miss Felix turned and confronted the young prisoner, who had halted behind the double grating.

Each looked straight into the eyes of the other. Reproach, aversion and the agony of despairing love were upon the faces of both.

"Oh, Wallie, how could you do anything so desperate—so dastardly?" was the girl's impetuous, wailing cry.

"Well, Mattie, have you come to see how bravely I have shouldered your sin?" was the young man's scornful, simultaneous interrogation.

And then followed a prison scene, never, perhaps, equaled in prison annals.

Instantly both became mindful that they were not alone, that other eyes were watching them, that other ears were listening for what their incautious lips might reveal.

And instantly the look and attitude of each changed. The young man seemed struggling with himself; Miss Felix seemed to have decided upon a startling course of action.

With her beautiful head erect, with a face as white as death, she turned to Maloney.

"Wallace Irving shall shoulder my sin no longer!" came with deliberate distinctness from her bloodless lips. "He is innocent. I alone am guilty of my uncle's death. Let him go free. I am ready to be confined in his place."

"Mattie, Mattie, you are mad!" the prisoner called, in an agonized voice through the iron bars. "The crime can be proved mine. You heard me quarreling with your uncle on that fatal night; you saw me hurrying through the trees in the midnight. The glove picked up beneath the window is witness against me. Would you sacrifice yourself to save me?"

"You were in the grounds, perhaps watching for the sight of one for whom you cared," Miss Felix said, in a strange voice; "and through the window you saw me in the room of death. You heard what was said by my uncle and by me. You did not witness the end. You did not behold the consummation of the deed, but you believe it was accomplished by me. And your lips shall not be sealed to shield me, Wallace Irving."

Jerry had arisen from his seat. To say that he was excited would be but to feebly portray the bewildering sensations he experienced.

De Latto came toward him. There was an indefinable expression of consternation on his none too agreeable countenance, and he gazed almost imploringly toward the detective.

"She is raving; she has become a maniac; we must get her away," he said.

He took a step toward her and put an arm persuasively about her waist.

"Cousin Mattie," he began entreatingly.

But she only flung back her head with a gesture of passionate resentment and violently wrenched herself from his restraining clasp.

As she did so De Latto uttered some incoherent ejaculation and started backward, with one hand pressed to his throat, which was reddened with swiftly-trickling blood.

"What is it? Are you hurt?" asked Jerry, as he went to him.

He tried to speak, but his words were choked in a curi-

ous gurgle, and his features had become of an ashen-purple hue.

In an instant more Jerry saw what had happened.

The pretty hat Miss Felix wore had been fastened by an ornamental pin, abnormally long, and sharp almost as a surgeon's lance.

As she flung back her head and wrenched herself from his embracing arm the point had penetrated and gashed deeply into the veins of his throat, and the seemingly trivial accident was more serious than might be supposed.

"We must have a doctor before I drive you home," said Maloney.

But he only shook his head and turned impatiently to descend to the car.

Miss Felix, with one last, long look at the prisoner, followed her cousin away, and we immediately drove back to the Tenerley residence.

The drive was a silent one. After her extraordinary declaration, Miss Felix had relapsed into a tragic reserve; and her cousin was becoming more and more incapable of speech.

"This hurt is not as slight as he thinks," Maloney muttered, as he anxiously watched him totter from the car and make his way weakly into the house. "He ought to look out for himself; for even so trivial a wound may prove fatal."

And such it proved in fact.

Some time the next day, Maloney was again summoned to the fatal house. Watson De Latto was dying, and he had made a written confession which he wished to submit to the detective.

For despite the contradictory declarations of the lovers in that memorable prison scene, the nephew was the real criminal.

He had determined to possess himself of the first will; he believed if the second one should be less favorable for his prospects he could at some future time effect a substitution of the one for the other. At least he thought the experiment would be worth trying.

In the midst of his examination of the safe, the old gentleman had awakened; and maddened with terror lest he should be recognized he had committed his unpremeditated crime of murder.

"And I should not have prevented the guilt being fixed upon young Irving; for I knew how my cousin loved him, and the thought of her becoming his wife frenzied me," were the last words of his pitiable confession.

Of course the prison scene had explained already the prior conduct of the lovers. Each had believed the other guilty, and each would have borne any punishment or disgrace rather than betray the other.

But love can pardon even suspicion as cruel and unjust as theirs had been, and they were very happily married a year or so after the remarkable events just related.

NO CHANGES IN CLIMATE

"WEATHER and climate have not changed from the time of the Pilgrims to the present day," are the closing words of an article by Prof. Robert de Ward of Harvard University on "The Snowfall of the United States," in *Scientific Monthly*.

That this is so is proved by a comparison of present day conditions with those so accurately recorded by the early settlers of New England. "There are accounts of great cold; of deep snows; of violent winter storms. There are also many descriptions of very mild and open winters. Thus, we read of December and January resembling May and June; of flowers growing in the woods in mid-winter; of so little snowfall 'as scarcely to give opportunity for enjoying the music of the sleigh bells;' of 'green Christmases;' of 'winter turned into summer;' of the ground bare for the most part;' of little ice; of crocuses up, of wild violets in bloom, and of lilacs 'throwing out their leaves' in January."

It is interesting to note that Prof. Ward awards the prize for the heaviest recorded average snowfall to Tamarack, Cal., with Summit, Cal., as a close second. The average fall at the former, which is at an altitude of 8,000 feet, is 521.3 inches, and at the latter (7,027 feet), it is 419.6 inches. In the winter of 1910-11 757 inches fell at Tamarack, and in 1879-80, 783 inches fell at Summit.

But in Mount Rainier, Wash., at Paradise Inn, at an elevation of 5,500 feet, from Nov. 24, 1916, to June, 1917, 789.5 inches fell, though that season was not one of unusually heavy snowfall. This was the first record obtained from that part of the Cascade Mountains, so it may be that Mount Rainier will take from the Sierra Nevada its distinction.

TALKS ON ASTRONOMY

IN recent years scientists, romancers and most all the rest of us have been fascinated by the possibility of other planets than ours are inhabited. Many facts have been brought forth to support this theory, and just as many more are cited to prove that the other planets cannot be the home of human beings.

There is Mercury, as an example. It is the nearest to the sun of all the planetary bodies, being just 28,500,000 miles distant at one time of the year. Perhaps that seems like a rather long distance, but it is of small consequence when compared with the 93,000,000 miles which separate our own plant from the sun. And Mercury gets something like six and a half times as much heat from the sun as we do in this world.

That very fact would seem to prove that human beings could not exist upon the planet Mercury. But advanced astronomers have concluded that Mercury may have a different kind of atmosphere from our own earth which would counterbalance the tremendous heat. Certainly, we could not live in any place that was six and a half times as hot as our own. In fact, we could not live upon Mercury at all. For the force of gravity on that planet is computed to be only one-third that upon this old ball of earth, which would mean that a body weighing 200 pounds here would weigh just sixty-six and two-thirds pounds on Mercury! And the 200-pound man would slide off the Mercurian surface for lack of weight.

Perhaps the strangest of all the strange things about Mercury is the fact that it does not rotate like the earth, keeping one side always turned toward the sun. This, of course, means that upon one side of the planet it is always day and upon the other half it is always night. To the people who live on the dark side—if such people there be—our own earth is a brilliant star "in the sky."

THE LAST MAN

Or, The House at the End of the Block

A Serial Detective Story

By POLICE SERGEANT MALLORY

CHAPTER EIGHT

RIVERVIEW PARK

SOMEWHAT back from the banks of the Hudson, midway between the towns of Yonkers and Hastings, there stands an old stone mansion in the midst of a beautiful park.

Built of rough blue stone blocks, and standing at the top of a little hill nearly buried amid the grand old trees which surround it, Riverview Park had long been the admiration of all who passed within sight of its walls.

From a little observatory on the roof the sweep of the noble Hudson could be observed for miles, while on the land side, the view of the wooded hills of Westchester was beautiful in the extreme.

It was the residence of the rich Mrs. Winters, who in the summer made it her home.

She lived there with one other person only beside her large corps of servants—Harry Bainbridge, her adopted son.

Who or what Mrs. Winters was no one very well knew.

She had appeared in the world of fashion some fifteen years before, announcing herself as a widow of ample means, which latter fact she speedily demonstrated by purchasing Riverview Park for an enormous sum, and likewise an elegant house on Fifth avenue, New York, where she lived amid every luxury which wealth could command.

A year later it was publicly announced that she had adopted Harry Bainbridge from a foundling asylum as her son, feeling lonely in her childless widowhood.

To be sure, society gossiped and talked, but Mrs. Winters pursued her course with indifference, and her tact and money soon won the day.

She was now admitted to the best society, and Harry Bainbridge, her adopted son, already in his nineteenth year, was equally loved and flattered by all.

He was a noble young fellow, handsome as an Apollo, and honorable and true as a youth could possibly be.

In his boyhood he had thought little of his position, but now, being at college, and knowing more of the world, he felt it with keenness and a certain degree of shame.

To be sure he was the heir to Mrs. Winters' fortune, and for most boys that would have been quite enough, but Harry Bainbridge longed to know his parentage more than any other one thing.

His early history was a complete blank, and although he had often tried he was unable to learn from his adopted parent the slightest fact which might give him a clue.

Was he an orphan? Did his parents live, and Mrs. Winters know them?

These were questions he was utterly unable to answer, and he allowed them to disturb his peace of mind night and day.

Among the many fashionable visitors to Riverview Park was the rich city merchant, Christopher Lombard, and his daughter Christine.

Christopher Lombard was a man of great wealth, or supposed to be, which amounts to the same thing; and Miss Christine, a beautiful blonde, with light-blue eyes and graceful tresses of auburn hair, was as pretty a girl as one would ask to see.

Between Mrs. Winters and this man there seemed to exist some secret understanding, as they had been most intimate for years, while between the daughter of the one and the adopted son of the other there had developed the warm love of ardent youth, and thrown together as the boy and girl had been, no one can wonder at this in the least.

Upon a delightful evening in June, shortly before the events of the last chapter, Mrs. Winters gave a lawn-party at her mansion, Riverview Park.

There was the usual music, dancing, Chinese lanterns, and bevies of handsome boys and pretty girls, as well as older devotees of fashion in abundance.

The festivities of the evening were ably presided over by Mrs. Winters herself, while the male guests were received by Harry Bainbridge, her adopted son.

But Harry Bainbridge felt anything but gay and festive upon that evening.

He had, in fact, just reached a desperate resolve, and when one is in such a frame of mind it is hard to fix the thoughts on trivial things.

He loved Christine Lombard with all the ardor of his true young heart, but strange to say, this love was strongly opposed by the father of its object, his adopted mother's warmest friend.

As for Mrs. Winters, she appeared indifferent, and it was this fact that had kept the youth from declaring his passion to Miss Christine herself.

To-night he had resolved to hesitate no longer—to have it out and over with at once.

Such of the readers of this simple narrative as have been through this trying ordeal know how it is for themselves; as for the rest, it would be useless to try and explain; enough to say that when a man has once made up his mind, he cannot rest until he has said his say.

The opportunity came at last, in a summer-house at the upper end of the grounds, whither the young pair had retired after the second waltz of the evening, and Harry Bainbridge made known his love in plain, manly terms.

Christine Lombard did not reply, but remained with her head turned away, mechanically pulling a rose to pieces which she carelessly held in her hand.

"Speak, Christine!" cried the youth, holding out his arms. "But one word from those charming lips, and you will make me the happiest man here to-night."

There was no reply.

Harry Bainbridge seized her hand.

"Christine," he said, pleadingly, "can it be possible, after all our intimacy, and the many signs of affection I have had from you, that you do not love me after all?"

"I do love you, Harry," cried the girl, turning suddenly about and facing him; "I love you with all my heart, but the Lombards are a proud old family, and you——"

"I am worse than nobody," replied the boy, quietly, turning deathly pale.

"I see, Christine—you can never be mine. Oh! my God! what shall I do?"

The poor boy bent his head and wept. She had wounded him in his most tender spot.

"I know it is unfeeling in me to say so, Harry," continued the girl, with a somewhat shamefaced air, "but you know how my father opposes this match, and it is on this ground entirely. Prove that you are of respectable parentage, and he will give his consent, I know."

"If you loved me half as well as I love you, Christine, you would wait for the consent of no one."

"I cannot marry without the consent of my father."

"And if I prove that I have a right to the name I say, or some other that is respectable, you will be mine?"

"I promise it, Harry, I do indeed."

"Then," cried the boy, "from this moment I devote myself to this work."

The words had hardly left his lips when a rustling sound was heard among the shrubbery without, and a dwarf hideously deformed burst in upon them.

Christine started back in affright.

"Who is that?" she cried.

"Only Mat, the idiot gate-keeper," replied Harry, for both he and his companion knew the intruder perfectly well.

"So it is. Mat, you burst in upon us so that you alarmed me—see that you don't do it again."

"But I want Master Harry," replied the dwarf, grinning and chattering, and swinging his long arms about him, according to a habit he possessed.

"Well," replied Harry, "here I am. What do you want?"

"To give you a note."

"A note—from whom?"

"A man."

"What man?"

"A man who came to the gate."

"Well, where is it, Mat? Let's have it," exclaimed the boy.

Fumbling in his hat-lining, the dwarf produced the note, and handed it to the boy.

Harry Bainbridge hastily tore it open, and glancing over it, uttered a cry of joyful surprise.

"Patience, Christine," he exclaimed; "I may accomplish my promise, and claim your hand sooner than I thought. But let us return to the dancers, and let me say good-by, for I go to the city immediately."

"Go to New York to-night?"

"I must. I have a summons here I must obey."

"What is its nature?"

"That I will explain to you to-morrow," cried the boy, laughing. "Make my apologies to my mother and my friends. I will return to-morrow, between eight and nine."

Little did he dream what lay before him, for many to-morrows were destined to elapse ere Harry Bainbridge saw the gray stone walls of Riverview Park again.

Leaving the young girl amid the merry throng, he hastened away, and stopping only at the house to catch up his street hat and cane, he followed the dwarf to the gate.

"Which way did the man go who gave you this paper, Mat?" he asked, as he passed through the gate-house door.

"Toward the station," was the reply.

"You are sure?"

"Certain," replied the dwarf, with a cunning grin which wholly belied the imputation of idiocy cast upon him by many who knew him.

"What time was he here?"

"About ten minutes ago."

"And he said nothing more?"

"Nothing, Master Harry; only asked me to bring the note to you."

"Strange," muttered the youth, taking out the paper and carefully reading it again.

It was as follows:

"HARRY BAINBRIDGE: Would you know your parentage? If so, meet the writer at his house, No. 99½ Jane street, near Abingdon Square, at exactly twelve o'clock to-night, and you shall learn the entire history of your past. Ring twice. ONE WHO KNOWS."

No one but an impetuous, hot-headed boy would have obeyed such a summons to enter a strange house in New York at that hour of the night and alone.

But Harry Bainbridge was both impetuous and hot-headed, and, moreover, he desired above all other things to learn the history of his past, for reasons of which we are well aware.

He looked at his watch.

He had just time to catch the train, and he started off for the station with rapid strides.

At a moment or two before midnight, a boy turned from Abingdon Square into Jane street, and began carefully to examine the numbers upon the houses by the dim light of the street-lamps.

"Ah! here's my house!" he exclaimed, half aloud, after examining the numbers on several doors in vain, and he turned to ascend the steps.

At that moment a rifle-shot rang out in the still night air, and Harry Bainbridge fell lifeless to the pavement.

Alas! for to-morrow!

Will to-morrow ever come?

CHAPTER NINE

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF HARRY BAINBRIDGE.

FOR the space of a few moments the unfortunate boy remained utterly unconscious.

The bullet, fired from an upper window, had penetrated his left side, but most fortunately had touched no vital part.

His unconsciousness was caused, therefore, more by the shock than the severity of the wound.

The next thing that he experienced was a sensation of falling.

The ground seemed giving way beneath him, and he felt that he was gradually sinking deeper and deeper down into some horrid pit.

He tried to rise and call out.

In vain.

His limbs seemed paralyzed, his tongue refused to perform its office.

To say that Harry Bainbridge was frightened does not express the sensations he experienced.

He was startled, mystified—perplexed.

He began to perceive dimly that in thus obeying an

anonymous summons to come to this house at midnight, and alone, he had done a very foolish thing.

He had but little time for these reflections, however, and such as they were, they flashed through his mind in less time than it takes to tell them, for the sinking motion of the ground suddenly ceased, and he found himself being encircled by a long and powerful arm.

"Mat!" he cried, his tongue loosened in his astonishment at seeing the dwarf who had delivered him the letter. "In the name of Heaven, who brought you here?"

At the same instant the stone on which he had fallen was shot back into its place in the sidewalk with a loud bang.

The dwarf was possessed of wonderful strength, and Harry Bainbridge, even had he been unwounded and able to exert his full strength, could not have contended with him for an instant.

To Harry's question he made no reply, but simply laid the wounded boy down upon the cellar floor.

At this moment he heard a deep voice behind him ask the question:

"Is he dead?"

"No; he spoke to me," replied the dwarf.

Harry knew the voice, and its sound only served to deepen the mystery. It was that of Christopher Lombard, the rich merchant, and the father of the girl he loved.

"Mr. Lombard!" he exclaimed, trying to rise. "In God's name, what does all this mean?"

Now this man, high as was the social position he occupied, was none the less he who had fired at the boy.

His intention had been to kill him secretly and outright, for reasons which will appear later on; but having failed, he could not bring himself to murder him in cold blood where he lay.

"Lie still!" he said gruffly.

"But what does this mean? Who has shot me? Why are you here?"

It was no use—this boy must never leave the place alive. The man evidently saw that he placed himself in a position where he must do murder or run a terrible personal risk.

Without paying any attention to Harry's questions, he stooped over the boy, and tearing away his clothing, examined the wound in his side.

"You young whelp!" he said, fiercely, as he rose; "you will probably die from the wound you have already, if not, we must attend to your case in some other way. You will never leave this place alive!"

Poor Harry's heart sank within him.

This, then, was the fiend who had shot him—this man the father of the girl he would have called by the sacred name of wife!

What it all meant he was wholly at a loss to imagine.

He had but a slight intimate acquaintance with the man before him, although, as a constant visitor at the house of his adopted mother, he had known him since his earliest childhood.

And did this man seek his life?

Such seemed to be the case.

"Take him away, Mat," he said to the misshapen dwarf who stood stolidly by, his long arms dangling at his side. "Take him away, and hide him in the lower vaults, where your father never goes. If he don't die in three or four days kill him, and I'll pay you well."

A terrible sensation of fear shot through the mind of the unfortunate boy. The perspiration broke out on his forehead cold and damp, and he realized at last to the fullest extent the terrible position in which he was placed.

There seemed to be no sort of use in appealing to fiends like them.

Yet he had known this Christopher Lombard all his life. He could not be so heartless, so utterly lost to all sensation of right.

"Mr. Lombard!" he cried in an agony of fear, "Mr. Lombard! for God's sake, have mercy! Let me at least know what all this means."

"Off with him, Mat!" cried the man, and never heeding poor Harry's piteous appeal, he turned and walked abruptly away, his footsteps echoing as they struck the stones of the paved cellar floor.

Without a word the dwarf seized the boy, and threw him over his back as though he had been a sack of meal.

He met with no resistance now, for the boy, from loss of blood, which had flowed freely from his wound, had fainted entirely away.

When Henry Bainbridge next regained his consciousness, he found himself stretched upon a miserable couch in what appeared to be a stone cell.

There were stone walls above and below him—walls, in fact, on every side.

Door to this singular apartment there was none, entrance being effected, as the boy afterward learned, by the lowering of the great stone which formed the ceiling, in a manner similar to the stone of the pavement, by means of which his first entry into the cellar had been made.

Away up near the ceiling, which was by no means very high, a little iron grating could be distinguished, leading, possibly, to some similar cells beyond, which admitted a feeble light.

For several days and nights—how many he was at a loss to divine—the wounded boy remained in this miserable place.

He saw no one save the dwarf, who occasionally descended by the trap to bring him food and drink, but from whom he could elicit nothing.

His wound was now nearly healed, and he felt with each return of his deformed jailer that his time had surely come.

He had no possible means of defense; the dwarf, on the contrary, was always heavily armed.

Day after day passed, and still his captor seemed in no hurry to execute his master's commands.

Harry Bainbridge had known this strange creature all his life. Indeed, Mat, the gate-keeper, had been one of the playmates of his earliest youth.

Possibly some sentiment in this connection was the cause of his life being spared, but more probably the dwarf acted from mercenary reasons of his own.

The whole thing was a dense mystery, and mystery it seemed likely to remain.

Sometimes the dwarf would not appear for one or two days, on which occasions he left a sufficient supply of food; but whether he came or stayed away, it made little difference to the prisoner, for he positively refused to converse with him at all.

Every effort on Harry's part, whether of bribery, promises or threats, was equally unavailing. Mat had but one answer:

"Don't talk to me; I've nothing to say."

As he sat in his cell one day—it might have been a week from the fatal night on which he was imprisoned, it might have been three, for he had lost all idea of time—Harry Bainbridge was startled by hearing a rattling noise.

It seemed to proceed from behind the grating before mentioned.

What could it be?

Until now the descent of the dwarf on the trap had been the only sound to strike his ear.

The rattling noise increased, and the heavy tread of a man could be heard, apparently in an adjoining room.

(To be continued)

THE MYSTERY OF HYPNOTISM

By LEO HUGO KOCH, A.C.S.

PART III

THE HOROS' CASE—WAS HYPNOTISM USED?

A GREAT deal of interest and excitement was once caused by lengthy reports published in all the English newspapers concerning a very peculiar case known as the "Horos' Case."

It appears that Theodore Horos and Mrs. Horos (otherwise Mr. and Mrs. Jackson), described as being at the head of a peculiar sect known as the "Theocratic Unity," and both of whom claim to belong to America, were brought up in custody before Mr. Curtis-Bennett at the Marylebone Police Court, London, to answer the charge of conspiring together to defraud several young women and girls of their money and jewelry, and also criminally assaulting them while under "hypnotic influence."

Here Hypnotism got the credit of being a terrible thing, but any professional hypnotist will tell you that the employment of Hypnotism under such circumstances is highly improbable and goes entirely against the fundamental principles of the science. The witnesses were more likely to have been under the influence of some chemical drug.

THE SECRET OF THE POWER!

A desire to obtain a knowledge of the wonderful and tremendous power of the mind over the body, or "mind over matter" as it is sometimes called, appeals to all alike. Every person in their right mind possesses this power to a more or less degree; in other words, any one can become a hypnotist providing he has sufficient confidence in himself and knows what to do and how to do it. But without you have that one essential—faith in yourself—it stands to reason that you cannot impart it to others; therefore, believe in yourself and others will believe in you, wherein lies the whole secret of success in Hypnotism.

HOW TO DO IT

Before commencing to hypnotize, always prepare your subject by seeing to it that he is thoroughly convinced that what you are about to perform is genuine. Tell him all that you wish him to know about the science, and what can be done with it; and, above all, tell him not to be afraid, as there is nothing to be afraid of, and ask him to do all that you tell him to do without questioning the why or the wherefore. Tell him to neither move, laugh nor speak, but to endeavor to concentrate his mind upon the object in view, i. e., to sleep. Ask him to place himself entirely under your control and assure him that you will not hurt him in any way. You will then have gained his confidence by this means.

There are various methods used in producing the hypnotic sleep, the best known and most effectual of which I give as follows:

No. 1.—Place your subject in a chair, then sit opposite him in another chair and gaze at him between the two eyebrows at the root of the nose; then ask him to open and close his eyes each time that you count; continue counting until you notice that the eyelids of the subject are apparently getting heavy and he has much difficulty in opening and closing them and the time elapsing between each movement is getting more extended. Then tell him to close his eyes "tight," "tight," "tighter!" and suggest that he is feeling sleepy, and continue to suggest it in varying terms until he is fast asleep.

No. 2.—Rotate the head of your subject a number of times in the same direction as the hands of a clock would move if placed flat on the top of his head, at the same time tell him to keep his eyes fixed on yours as you stand in front, while you keep both your eyes fixed steadily on the root of the subject's nose (between the eyebrows) and keep suggesting to him, in a low but decided tone, that he is feeling sleepy, his eyelids are growing heavy, etc., until you begin to see the effect of the suggestion acting as you desire (practice will teach you this), then command him, in a calm but firm voice, to close his eyes (you should have gradually slackened the rotating movements before reaching this point), and pressing gently on the top of his head force it downward so that the chin will rest on his breast; by this time you will probably observe that the subject is breathing heavily and is fast asleep. Then press lightly on the right temple, and, without resistance, his head will fall over toward the left shoulder.

No. 3.—This test should be practiced at night time, and requires for its success a strong electric or other bright light. Place your subject immediately beneath it and direct him to place his feet flat upon the floor with the palms of his hands resting upon his knees; then tell him to look up at the light and keep his eyes fixed steadily upon it, while you in turn gaze steadily at him, between the eyebrows. After he has been gazing this way for about five minutes tell him to concentrate his mind upon going to sleep, while you suggest to him, in a low, monotonous tone, as follows: "Your eyes are growing tired and weak. Your eyelids feel heavy and you cannot seem to keep them open much longer. You are thinking of sleep. You are sleepy and drowsy. Sleep—sleeping—sleep sound—fast asleep—sound asleep!"

By this time you will (if successful with your subject) find that he is in the condition that the last word implies and that he is breathing deeply. Always listen for this deep breathing, and by its means you will discover whether you have properly produced the hypnotic sleep, and it is also advisable, sometimes, when giving the above suggestions, to place your hand gently over the diaphragm (chest) and make a gentle pressure, keeping time with the respirations of the subject, at the same time telling him to take deep breaths.

No. 4.—Tell your subject to close his eyes tightly and direct them, under the lids, across each other to the point of the nose, in order to produce a squint or "strabismus." This induces fatigue of the eyes, a strain on the nerves, and sleep sometimes follows. A similar effect may also be produced by directing the subject to turn his eyes upward (beneath the lids) as far as possible, and commanding him to keep them in that position and endeavor to open his eyelids at the same time. This is an utter impossibility, and if the subject does open his eyes you can inform him that he is not carrying out your instruction or it would not be possible for him to do so. If, on the other hand, you can see that he is trying to do so, by the movements of the muscles of his eyelids, and fails, suggest to him: "Your

eyes are closed fast and you cannot open them. The lids are stuck fast down and you will be unable to open them until I tell you."

Then release them by snapping the fingers and say, "All right! You can open them," or continue giving suggestions for sleep as in No. 3.

HYPNOTISM BY MEANS OF A REVOLVING MIRROR

The above method of producing the hypnotic sleep was first introduced by Dr. Luys of the Charité Hospital in Paris.

It consists of a number of small pieces of looking-glass inserted into an oblong piece of wood, making it look as if covered with facets or polished surfaces of a precious stone cut by an expert lapidary, such as a diamond. It is placed on a pivot and set revolving rapidly by means of clockwork or other mechanical contrivance, and when set in motion it creates a peculiar fatigue of the optic nerves, which, aided by the suggestion of the hypnotist soon produces the hypnotic sleep.

The mirror should be placed upon a round table and the subjects for hypnosis should be seated around it and told to gaze steadily at it as it revolves. The hypnotist should make suggestions of sleep while they are looking at the mirror, and frequently it takes but a few seconds before they will be found to be under the hypnotic influence.

HOW TO HYPNOTIZE PERSONS IN THEIR NATURAL SLEEP

To hypnotize or give suggestions to persons while in their natural sleep, the operator should take up a position quietly beside the bed or couch of the sleeper and in a low tone of voice address him as follows:

"Now" (addressing him by his proper name), "I do not want you to wake up; but you can hear every word that I am saying to you."

Keep repeating these suggestions over and over in a voice just above a whisper, gradually raising the voice until it reaches that pitch that under ordinary circumstances would probably tend to awaken the sleeper. When you feel positive that you have gained his attention, take hold of one of his hands and raise it very gently in an upright position and give him a suggestion to keep it there. If he obeys your commands you may feel certain that he is under your influence—that he is hypnotized.

AUTO-HYPNOSIS; OR, SELF-INDUCED SLEEP.

"I sincerely believe," says Dr. Watterstrand, "there is no better remedy for insomnia than hypnosis. Experienced physicians share this opinion. By hypnotic suggestion the sleepless person learns so to control his sleep that it becomes possible for him to sleep whenever he wants to."

Did you ever go to bed with the intention of going to sleep, but, do what you would, you could not sleep at all, and you turn and twist from one side of the bed to the other, but all in vain?

This results, as a rule, from the inability, for the time being, to place yourself in a passive state. Your brain dwells probably upon the events that have occurred throughout the day; your nerves are at a tension; your mind is not at rest.

Endeavor to control the muscles of your body and place them in a passive condition; roll your eyes, with the lids closed, up into the head as far as you can possibly get them; and, as a rule, sleep will immediately follow.

HOW TO MESMERIZE.

The difference between Hypnotism (so named and discovered by Dr. Braid of Manchester, England) and Mesmerism is that the former is produced by concentration of the gaze and suggestion, and the latter is produced by passes over the head and body of the subject.

In order to mesmerize a person it is best to have them lying down on a couch or reclining in an arm-chair. Commence by making passes down over the crown of the head to the forehead with the finger-tips of both hands, then from the center of the forehead draw the hands in opposite directions over the temples and off to the shoulders; repeat these movements slowly for some time, at the same time strongly willing your subject to sleep.

HOW TO GIVE AN ENTERTAINMENT.

As a means of providing an entertainment, either private or public, Hypnotism has no equal; and no other form of entertaining will furnish so much genuine amusement and mystification.

The following is a good way of providing an evening's entertainment:

First, having gotten a number of persons to volunteer as subjects (say 10 or 12), hypnotize by the following original method which does not, as a rule, require much oral suggestion and is especially adapted to stage performances, being very effective: Give each of your subjects—who should be seated on chairs in a semi-circle facing the audience—a bright, metal disc to look at, which should rest in the center of the left palm, the latter being supported by resting the elbow in the right hand. Direct them to gaze down at the disc and at the same time command them to neither "laugh, move nor speak," but to center their thoughts upon going to sleep, or, better, still, to try and not think of anything at all. After they have been gazing at their object some little time (5 or 10 minutes will suffice as a rule) you will observe that some of them are apparently getting under the influence, and their eyes are beginning to wink and blink in an apparently sleepy manner. Commence with the first one you observe, and standing in front of him press with your forefinger and thumb upon the back of his neck, bringing his head down toward his knees, when—if he has become susceptible to the hypnotic influence—he will fall like a log to the floor, but will not hurt himself. Having now proved your subjects by this test, they should be awakened again and seated in chairs. You can then proceed with the remaining portion of the entertainment. Take hold of the hands of each one and place them with fingers locked together, and tell them, each individually, that they cannot separate them. It will be quite amusing to witness their efforts to do so, straining every nerve and muscle the while, and thoroughly demonstrating to those present, and their own satisfaction, that it is quite impossible until you release them from the influence.

Next, make them imagine that they are suffering from excruciating pangs of toothache, by placing the tip of the forefinger on a certain spot over the upper or lower jaw and pressing it slightly; the faces they pull will produce roars of laughter. Then suggest to each that they have stiff legs, by making them stand up, and taking hold of one of their hands in yours, stoop down (keeping your eyes fixed on the root of the subject's nose all the time) and pat the leg gently, just above the kneecap; keep suggesting that the leg is stiff and at the same time pull the subject gently forward until you have compelled him to walk several steps and is apparently "stiff-legged."

The organs of speech can also be affected so that the subject cannot pronounce even his own name.

These and a thousand other things that the operator may think of can be introduced, and the utter astonishment written upon the subjects' faces, upon being awakened, is very funny to observe.

(To be continued)

THE SCIENCE OF FORTUNE-TELLING

PART III

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FINGERS

THE structure of the hand itself is most admirable in respect to the proportion it beareth to the face and certain parts thereof, which is this:

The whole hand is of equal length with the face.

The greater joint of the forefinger equals the height of the forehead.

The other two (to the extremity of the nail) is just the length of the nose, viz., from the intercelia, or place between the eyebrows, to the tip of the nostrils.

The first and greater joint of the middle finger is just as long as it is between the bottom of the chin and the top of the under lip.

The largest joint of the thumb gives the width of the mouth.

The lesser joint of the thumb is equal to the distance between the top of the under lip and the lower part of the nostrils. The nails obtain just the half of their respective uppermost joints which they call omychios.

THE THUMB

Overthwart lines that are clear and long underneath the nail and joint of the thumb confer riches and honor. A line passing from the upper joint of the thumb to the cardiaca threatens a violent death, or danger, by means of some married lady. Lines everywhere dispersed of the lower joint of the thumb describe men that are contentious, and such as rejoice in scolding, etc. A line surrounding the thumb in the middle joint portends the man shall be hanged.

THE FOREFINGER

Many lines in the uppermost joint, and they proceeding overthwartly, denote inheritances; by running so in the middle joint, an envious and evil-disposed person.

Right lines running between these joints, declare (in the ladies) a numerous issue. In gentlemen, bitterness in the tongue. If they are in the first joint near unto Jupiter's mouth, they manifest a jovial disposition, that is, they point to the man whom Jupiter favored well in his nativity. That woman who hath a star in the same place may safely be pronounced unchaste and lascivious.

THE MIDDLE FINGER

This finger, presenting little gridirons in the joints thereof, plainly declares an unhappy and melancholy wit, but if equal lines, it manifesteth fortune by metals, etc. A star there presages a violent death by drowning, etc. If a cross line be extended from the root thereof upwards, through the whole finger into the end of the last joint it argues folly and madness.

THE RING FINGER

A line rising from mons solis, and ascending by a right track through the joints thereof, it shows a noble frame. Equal lines in the first joint demonstrate honors and riches. Overthwart lines, the enmity of great men.

THE LITTLE FINGER

From the joint thereof, as from the mount itself, are judgments and decrees passed concerning merchandise, favors, and a star in the first joint near the tuberculum, urges ingenuity and eloquence.

Other obtuse signs the contrary; but when there appear unfortunate signs in the first and second joints, they mark out a thief and a very deceitful person. If adverse lines in the last joint, perpetual inconstancy.

SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING LINES

The quantity of all lines must be wisely observed, that is, the length and depth; so likewise their quality, crooked or straight; next their action, which is to touch or cut other lines. Their passion to be touched or cut of others; and lastly, their place and position.

We must know that the lines are sometimes prolonged until certain years of our age, otherwise shortened; now they wax pale, then they become plain and strong, and as it were luxuriate with a kind of redness, and this as well in the principal as less principal lines. Again, as touching the less principal, and such as are found in the tubercula of the planets, it is most certain that some do one time quite vanish, and that at another time others arise of a different shape and complexion; the cause of which I suppose to be no other than the various progressions of the alphabetical places in their nativities; that is to say, fortunate and unfortunate, to the influence whereof man himself is wonderfully subject. The signs of his hand are presented at different times with quite different faces.

With this practical exemplification of the value of Chiromancy it may be as well to draw this article to a close. Of all people in the world, Americans are most inclined to judge of the truth of a science by putting it to the test of practical utility; and, judged by this test, chiromancy must indeed stand high. The history of the world bristles with examples of the service it has rendered. We read in Josephus that Cæsar was so well versed in the science that when a soi-disant son of Herod had audience of him, he at once detected the impostor, because his hand was destitute of any marks of royalty. Scoffers may indeed urge that it does not need either the acumen of a Cæsar or the special knowledge of a chiromantist to distinguish between the hand of an adventurer and that of one born in the purple; but the true votary of science will not allow himself to be discouraged by the cheap scorn of the incredulous; and from the days of Josephus until within comparatively recent times, the science of chiromancy has been held in the honor it deserves. That the state of affairs should nowadays be so different induces, no doubt, regret, but can hardly excite astonishment. For that an age which has removed all the old landmarks of traditional belief and time-honored statecraft should shrink with timidity from any attempt to unveil the future which it is thus preparing for individuals as well as nations, is most strictly natural.

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

CONSCIENCE DROVE HIM BACK TO PRISON

Unable longer to resist the gnawings of conscience, Elmer E. Barnard, who escaped from the Oregon State Penitentiary in company with Cecil Griffin and Ray Lindsey on the night of Aug. 2, 1916, walked into Gov. Olcott's office one day recently and informed the Executive that he had returned to Salem voluntarily to serve out his maximum term of ten years.

DOG BARRED FROM CEMETERY

When a Beloit, Kan., resident learned that Dr. D. S. O'Brien had buried his dog, Jack, in Elmwood Cemetery, petitions of protest poured into the Council. The dog's body was removed from the cemetery and reinterred in the doctor's backyard after six attorneys, a special referee and a District Court Judge had looked up the law on the subject. Jack died a year ago and his place was hard to fill, because he had a special chair and ate at the table as if human. He was buried in a special coffin with a silver nameplate and went to his first resting place under a pile of flowers. His former owner about a month ago disinterred the dog and buried it in Elmwood Cemetery.

NO EVE, NO ADAM, NO SNAKE

Evidence older than the Bible by 2,000 or 3,000 years that woman hadn't a thing to do with the fall of the human race was produced by the museum of the University of Pennsylvania in the form of a new set of translations by Dr. Stephen Herbert Langdon.

Dr. Langdon, now professor at Oxford, was curator of the Babylonian section of the museum, and translated thousands of Sumerian tablets from the ruins of Nippur. According to one of the flood stories in the collection, Noah ate the forbidden fruit after he had been saved from the flood.

Salvation was accomplished, according to the Sumerian version, by a woman deity. There is no mention of any Eve in the story.

The Sumerian records at the museum provide an apparent history of man back to 14,000 years before Christ.

REAL RATTLESNAKES BOTTLED

Detective Schneider and Chuven entered the home of W. A. Bevan, an electrical engineer at No. 4720 Franklin Street. Immediately they saw a row of dark bottles upon a shelf. Schneider, scenting illicit liquor, made for the shelf and opened one of the bottles. The next instant he dropped the bottle and leaped clear across the room.

From the bottle where it lay on the floor came a hissing rattlesnake. "Don't get excited, gentlemen," said Bevan. "Those are just a few pets I have around here to keep me company."

Schneider and Chuven found that the remaining bottles on the shelf contained lizards, horned toads, mice and other reptiles and rodents. Elsewhere were found several dozen bottles of freshly brewed liquor and a jar of mash. Bevan was held for violating the Prohibition Law.

STRANGE WAYS OF TELLING TIME

To ascertain the time at night the Apache Indians employed a gourd on which the stars of the heavens were marked. As the constellations rose in the sky, the Indian referred to his gourd and found out the hour. By turning the gourd around he could tell the order in which the constellations might be expected to appear. The hill people of Assam reckon time and distance by the number of quids of betel-nuts chewed. It will be remembered how, according to Washington Irving, the Dutch Colonial Assembly was invariably dismissed at the last puff of the third pipe of tobacco of Governor Wutoer Van Twiller. A Montagnis Indian of Canada will set up a tall stick in the snow when traveling ahead of friends who are to follow. He marks with his foot the line of shadow cast, and by the change in the angle of the shadow the oncoming party can tell, on arriving at the spot, about how far ahead the leader is.

PLACES WEDDING RING ON FIANCEE, THEN DROPS DEAD

Lieut. Horace S. Frost, world war veteran and a prominent business man of Washington and Philadelphia, died at No. 4945 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, after placing a wedding ring on the finger of Mrs. Virginia Lee Stuart, his fiancee. "Now we are married, Janie," he said, and tried to kiss her hand, but his strength was gone.

Mrs. Stuart, member of an old and wealthy Southern family, came to Philadelphia a week ago to help three physicians and two trained nurses battle for her sweetheart's life.

"All through his delirium," she said, "he kept talking about our marriage. He would ask if our suitcases were packed. He asked time after time for the ceremony to be performed. Then, at the last, he called to the nurse, asking for the ring she had taken from his finger. He put it on mine as he said: 'Now we are married, Janie.' 'Janie' was his pet name for me. Of course, we were not married, but, oh, I wish it might have been."

SLEEPS 92 DAYS; DIES

After sleeping ninety-two days Mrs. Fred Tracey is dead at her home at Oxford, N. Y., of what is popularly known as the sleeping sickness, or in scientific terms, lethargic encephalitis-inflammation of the brain characterized chiefly by deep lethargy. Doctors all over this country have been interested in Mrs. Tracey's case; those here say it was endured longer than any such recorded in medical annals.

Mrs. Tracey, about a year ago, suffered from influenza. But she appeared to be in good health when she retired on the night of Oct. 6 last. Next morning her family could not awaken her. She slept steadily and profoundly until on Dec. 23, she was aroused by the music of a violin reproduced on a Victrola. She awoke again on Christmas Day, manifested interest in the holiday and partook of a little bit of turkey.

After that Mrs. Tracey awoke very rarely and for very brief periods.

GIRL FRIGHTENED INTO LOSS OF VOICE

Florence McGlochlin, fourteen-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. McGlochlin, lost her voice through fright when she and three companions met four mountain lions on Potato Hill, two miles east of Hot Sulphur Springs, Colo.

She was taken home and put under the care of a doctor.

The lions did not attempt to attack the young people, but disappeared in the timber. Al McGlochlin organized a hunting party the next morning, and, with five of his best dogs, took up the trail of the lions, but did not find them.

Miss McGlochin, Miss Espey Gilmour, Frank Frogge and Frank McQueary, Jr., were climbing the hills. Miss McGlochlin was ahead of the others when she topped a ridge and came face to face with two large, full grown mountain lions and two kittens about twenty or thirty yards from her. She dropped upon a rock and tried to scream, but was unable to utter a sound. One of the kittens, it is said, took a step or two toward her, and she started to run down the hill, but stumbled over a rock and collapsed.

Her companions started toward town with her but were unable to take her all the way. One remained with her while the other two went to town and notified Mr. McGlochlin, who took the girl home.

The old lions apparently made no effort to attack the girl. but went over the hill, followed by the kittens.

Tracks of four mountain lions are reported to have been seen on the Sulphur-Parshall divide and elsewhere close to Hot Sulphur Springs.

Miss McGlochlin, was able to talk the next day, but is still confined to her bed.

JESSE POMEROY 43 YEARS IN PRISON

Jesse Pomeroy, the Dorchester murderer, who is serving his forty-third year in the Charlestown state prison, to-day observed his sixtieth birthday within the prison walls. He received several postcards and a birthday cake.

Warden Elmer E. Shattuck was the first person to offer congratulations. Pomeroy thanked the warden, adding that he never had expected to live so long.

The prisoner, decrepit and nearly blind, did his usual day's work, that consists principally of picking papers off the prison grass plots, but he spent most of the day poring over the Bible that has been his chief solace since the death of his mother, Mrs. Ruth Pomeroy, five years ago.

Pomeroy was seventeen when he entered Charlestown prison, September 9, 1876. He had been a criminal since his eleventh year, and was a reformatory inmate from 1872 to 1874. In the latter year a series of crimes against children terrorized South Boston and Dorchester. Several school children were attacked, and finally two were murdered.

A cast in one of Pomeroy's eyes played the chief part in fastening on him responsibility for the crimes, for numbers of little children had told of being frightened by "the big boy with the white eye." Pomeroy confessed to the murders and was sentenced to be hanged. On account of his youth, Governor Price commuted the sentence, prescribing, however, a rigorous solitary confinement as even "a fitter punishment for a fiend incarnate."

For forty-one years Pomeroy lived in a tiny cell. For thirty-six he saw only the keepers and his mother. He spent his hours in tireless study to avoid going mad. Since entering the prison he has mastered seven languages and acquired a wide knowledge of law.

He has made twelve attempts to escape, all failures. For the last, in December, 1892, he was "punished" by being deprived of his books and was put on a bread and water diet for a short time.

But with age he has lost his spirit of defiance. Things of the outside world no longer interest him. He prefers to read his Bible and his law books, and is hard at work on Arabic, hoping to add this language to his repertory before his dimming eyes fail entirely.

A PRODIGY IN MATHEMATICS

Illinois possesses a mathematical prodigy in William Strong, twenty-eight years old, of Tazewell County. He has been able to solve any problem in arithmetic that has been given to him. He reels off millions and billions with equal precision and promptness. One of his feats is to wander down to the railway station when a freight train dashes away and add up the numbers on the side of the cars. By the time the last car has passed he has the total.

People who are skeptical concerning his powers come long distances to test them. They are primed with brain-racking problems, but all prove easy for Strong. One of the most common queries relates to the number of seconds in a lifetime, given the date of birth. One who propounded this problem gave him the date January 26, 1873. Right off the reel came this reply: "15,783 days, 378,392 hours, 23,703,530 minutes, 1,362,211,200 seconds."

Another problem was: "It is 155 miles to Chicago. How many pounds of rails in the track at eighty pounds to the yard?" Without hesitation came the reply: "436,448,000."

Another one was: "An automobile wheel is thirty inches in diameter. How many revolutions will this wheel make in traveling the 155 miles to Chicago?" Strong came back with this answer: "104,476 revolutions."

A nail problem came next. He was told that thirty-two nails were to be driven. One cent would be paid for the first, 2 cents for the second and double the sum for each succeeding nail. He was asked how much he would be paid for the thirty-second nail. Almost instantly the answer came: $21,474,000.48.

One skeptic propounded: "With 25,000 miles around the earth and silver dollars at an inch and a quarter in diameter, how many will it take to girdle it?" Strong answered: "1,267,200,000."

He was asked to give the total of all the numbers from one up to 9,600, adding them together. His answer was 46,084,800. The total of the numbers from one up to 78,000 was 3,042,939,000.

Strong was asked how many bricks would be required to lay a pavement from New York to San Francisco, 3,578 miles, the pavement to be sixty feet wide and the brick eight inches long and two inches wide. He figured that it would require just 10,201,377,600 bricks.

Asked to divide 68,719,476,736 by 32,768, he answered instantly: "2,097,152."

Strong says this peculiar talent has been with him since early youth. He was the despair of the teachers and the envy of the other children when he solved problems in a moment that required hours for the others. He says there is no particularly severe mental strain when working out the problems, that the answers stand out in front of him, so prompt is the response of his extraordinary brain to the demands that are put upon it. Strong never grows impatient when there are undue demands made upon him for answers to their problems. He treats all courteously and enjoys the look of amazement he evokes.

Strong has had many opportunities to travel with a circus and exhibit his extraordinary mental gift, but has declined all offers.

PAINTED SOLES OUTWEAR UPPERS

Painting the soles of shoes will preserve the leather a long time. F. W. Charles of Seattle sends the Scientific American the following instructions as to doing it. He says they are the result of much experimentation.

"For a pair of shoes that have the shiny dressing worn off the soles, put on three coats of paint—ordinary hard finish black paint will do—allowing each coat to dry forty-eight hours before applying the next paint. That is all there is to it.

"If the shoes are new, with the sole dressing intact so that the paint will not penetrate, roughen the surface with fine sandpaper. The paint will soon wear off the soles, but that which has penetrated the leather will remain and continue to perform its good offices. Repeat the process once each season and soles will cease to worry you; the life of your sheos will be measured by that of the uppers—and this will be greatly prolonged by the elimination of the half-soling process, with its great wear and tear on the edges of the soft leather.

"In proof of all this, I can cite a pair of Oxfords which I am now wearing for the third summer. The heels are slightly worn, but they were never painted. I may say, as further evidence of what this showing means, that I walk about for some fourteen or fifteen hours per day."

ARMY SHOE REPAIR SHOP WORKS IN MOTOR TRUCK TRAIN.

Two Packard trucks, especially equipped for the United States Army as automobile shoe repair shop, recently passed through New York on a test trip from Boston to Washington, D. C. The purpose of the trip was to show how easily such an outfit can be moved from one place to another, what speed can be obtained and how the entire outfit would stand up under a 300-mile road test. These tests will enable the army officials to determine the practicality of the scheme for field use.

The first truck carries all the machinery necessary to remake and rebuild shoes. This machinery is driven by a separate motor connected with the driving shaft of the Goodyear stitcher, the nailer the scouring and finishing wheels. This motor also furnishes electric light through a dynamo so the apparatus may be used at night. Heating facilities are provided through registers connected with the exhaust.

The second truck is equipped as a supply truck. It carries the supplies which go into repairing soldiers' shoes such as sole leather, heel lifts, hob nails, tacks, welting and other necessary findings as well as extra machine parts for both the trucks and the repair machinery.

It is expected that this equipment will be found useful at points where troops are quartered away from supply bases and permanent camps. No man's shoes need repairing as often as the soldier's, as soldier's feet must be kept in good condition.

The supply truck can also be used to dispatch repaired shoes to various points along the lines where troops are located, and may go back and forth from army bases in order that supplies for shoe repairing may be on hand at all times. Sleeping quarters for six men are available in the supply truck.

Army officials estimate that approximately 800 pairs of shoes a day can be tapped when the mobile outfit is running with a day and night crew of seven men.

A complete set of tools to pull either car out of snowdrifts or mud, consisting of ground anchor, winches, ropes, chains, picks and shovels, is carried in outside compartments.

First Lieutenant Philip P. Maloney, of the Quartermaster Corps, of Washington, was in charge of the trucks and the crew. Six other army men made up the crew.

HOW THE "DOCTOR" FOOLED THEM

Probably the most successful getaway ever made in the magic name of gold in Hayti was perpetrated recently by a white foreigner who traveled over the interior under the title of "doctor," which to the native means magician, big seer, superman, as well as big chief medicine man. This worthy, after a careful research into the requirements for making hard cash on the buried treasure superstition, came to the conclusion that he would do well to sell his services to the hundreds of native landowners who had grown up with the idea that there was buried gold somewhere on their farms, requiring only a man with second sight to locate the spot.

The "doctor's" little trick was well staged, and, due to poor communication in Hayti, coupled with superstition as to his superhuman powers for good or ill, he was enabled to work it several hundred times and get away from the island before the storm of disillusionment could overtake him.

Before listening to a client who wanted to find buried treasure the doctor required an initial retaining fee of from one hundred to a thousand Haytian gourdes, the equivalent of $20 to $200. This was always readily forthcoming. The doctor then rode to the farm in question and spent an hour walking in a trance about the grounds. Suddenly the light would strike him. Amid much gesticulation, while the gaping negroes stared pop eyed in an awed circle around him, he demanded two barrels, two shovels, two pieces of burlap and some strong cord. He pointed excitedly to a certain spot in the ground, where he soon began to dig furiously. Shortly becoming exhausted, he turned the digging over to the natives.

After a reasonable hole had been sunk, the doctor placed therein the two barrels. All this was carried on with a proper air of mystery. The barrels were then filled with loose earth, the burlap tightly stretched over the head of each, and the string knotted fast about them while the doctor muttered incantations. All this was satisfactorily mysterious in the primitive mind.

The doctor then rose and warned the natives on pain of damnation not to look in the barrels for two days, after which time said barrels would be full of gold coin. He added the fact with great emphasis that if any one looked inside before the time was up the gold would turn to mud.

The natives, well pleased with all this procedure, returned happily to their domiciles to await the day When the day came the doctor arrived at the hole a little earlier than his clients and made clean cut slits across the canvas heads of the barrels. The natives came up in awed expectancy. They found the doctor acting like a raving maniac. He was cursing and swearing, tearing his hair, crying and rolling on the ground.

Between gasps he asked them why, oh, why, they could not have heeded his warning and received the gold that had almost hatched, when some curious mind had conceived the cutting of the burlap. He pointed dramatically to the cut burlap and dipped out a handful of the dirt within. Indeed, the gold had turned to mud just as he had warned them. The disappointed natives began to cry and moan. Then they pointed accusing fingers at each other. Some one among them had sneaked out in the night hoping to steal all the gold. Their mutual suspicions rose to fury against each other and in groups they waged battle.

In the midst of the commotion the smooth doctor, shouting that their chance had gone forever, rode away.

SALTON SEA MARVEL

The Salton Sea in the Imperial Valley, one of the natural wonders of the West, is constantly shrinking. At present it is about eighteen miles long and nine miles wide at the greatest point.

During the last five years the water is said to have retreated about a mile a year, leaving a salt encrusted adobe land, which is eagerly seized by homesteaders. Often their location stakes are planted far out in the water.

The sea, which lies 169 feet below the level of the ocean, abounds in mullet and carp, which local and Arizona capitalists are planning to utilize by the erection of a great cannery.

Mud volcanos abound near the sea a short distance inland. They are up to sixteen feet in height. They all emit steam, some in a steady stream, others steam and mud alternately. Many of them give a sulphuric gas. At times their roaring can be heard for miles.

Of especial interest to the tourist are the bubbling "paintpots" as the water retreats it is in a state of constant ebullition. Gases from some unknown subterranean source are continually finding escape through unseen vents in the bottom. Layer after layer of colored pigment is deposited. The retreating waters have left uncovered acres of this deposit said by experts to be fully equal to the dry sienna and umber colors, of which so much is imported.

NEW THINGS

A school to teach the arts, sciences and agriculture is planned for Iquitos by the Peruvian Government.

Attachments have been patented that permit the use of anti-skid chains on automobiles using disc wheels.

France is making extensive use of portable power plants up to 50 horsepower that use crude oil for fuel.

In a new electrically operated ironing machine a flat iron is mechanically moved over a board, but its course is directed by a hand lever.

Holland has begun to produce salt from wells drilled experimentally in two provinces and may be able to obtain enough for all of its needs.

When water boils in a kettle invented in Japan, the bubbles hit metallic bars and produce musical sounds.

A short distance range finder invented in Sweden is as useful to surveyors as military men.

Paints that are said to be both fire and water proof are made from a Manchurian bean.

Holders to make tiny electric lamps used on Christmas trees resemble candles have been invented.

An electric pen has been invented by a native of India that carbonizes paper over which it passes.

Sheep are used as beasts of burden in northern India and carry twenty pound loads.

Bristles are set in the end of a new coat hanger so it can be used as a brush.

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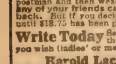

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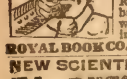

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